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The Vital Study of Literature and Other Essays

THE VITAL STUDY OF LITERATURE

and OTHER ESSAYS

BY

WILLIAM NORMAN GUTHRIE

CHICAGO

CHARLES H. SERGEL & COMPANY

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FOREWORD.

The present volume cannot claim to be a real book. A real book is the product of long and great love for some one inspiring idea. The creative toil may have been intermittent, yet some single preconceived plan has secured in advance the organic unity of the finished work. Now this, that lies before the reader, is but a loose aggregation of lectures committed to paper after the white heat of delivery had cooled, together with several more or less painstaking and extensive reviews, written because of particular concern in a contemporary publication or for the promotion of an espoused cause, each separately composed without any regard whatever to the possible or actual existence of one another. When, however, these detached lectures and essays came to be collected,—all but one of which appeared at the time of their production in some periodical—what surprised not a little their compiler and reviewer was the inherent unity of design and tendency they exhibit. To group them was no difficult task. First were naturally placed four papers in which certain beliefs held and abided by as teacher and lecturer are advocated not unseldom with what may, to the precise and frigid, seem quite inordinate zeal. In year-long struggle for the recognition of certain values aesthetic and intellectual,

the writer had become unconsciously a special pleader; he had grown paradoxical in method of statement, to keep his audience duly attentive to the ignored obvious, and to the subtly elusive; oracular, lest admitting exceptions, the rule be disesteemed; ardent, emphatic, even vehement, to kindle interest if possible in the indifferent and temperamentally non-committal.

The second third of this volume consists of three studies devoted to what may be called *orphic poetry*, by manifest allusion to the spell-power and the mystic unintelligibility of that singer, who set the trees deep-rooted in the soil of convention, a-dancing, and caused the brute beast of greed and carnal desire to wax human and divinely sane. That myth has long been to the writer a solace and a confession of faith. In bringing out his collection of verse: "Orpheus To-day," it had been given precedence of every other theme. In his view, the great poet was always a prophet of glories to come. Even a Leopardi, in his direst lyrical pessimisms, fills the reader with pride of breed, akin, as he feels himself, to so sincere and fervent a disallower of things as they are.

The likelihood, indeed, seems to be that great poets shall be great men also, even if not always so good as the self-righteous Ben Jonson affirmed, who pictures himself as bearing his "own innocency about" him, reckless of the hazard it ran thus of soil or dent! If great men, the great poets will doubtless experience a large vital sym-

pathy with their fellows. Furthermore, they will be organic and original, that is spontaneous, in thought, and wonted to free initiative as regards expression. Hardly can they be suckled at the breasts of contemporaneous institutions, and thrive for long on the pure milk of an orthodox tradition. They will cry with Emerson:

> "We drink diluted wine,
> We eat ashes for bread."

They are, at all cost of anxiety and distress to themselves and those they hold dear, fated to ascend (or, as the case may appear to be, descend,) until they have explored what they deem veritable sources. There alone can they brook to drink themselves of the water of life freely; and having quenched their thirst, they will catch perforce a little thereof in some poetic vessel, and graciously store it for the elect of mankind, to awake in them the ambition of a similar quest.

The great poets are not when at their worthiest, professing teachers. A stated message, so-called, they rarely intend to convey. Didactic verses, at all events, they abhor, except in their dotage, or in a drowsy hour when all things lapse to aesthetic confusion. Pedagogues and mystigogues, demagogues, and peripatetic venders of panaceas, the great poets are never! But in their own spiritual initiations, secrets were revealed to them that must gain utterance, all the more prophetic when unaware, not because the doctrine, as such, has to be imparted, but that its emotional concomitants

of wonder and worship press for aesthetic constraint and communication. They have what seems to them the life-giving truth; and the passionate love thereof, and the joy of its possession, incite to lyric ecstasies, which break forth of themselves and inevitably into lyric numbers. These duly fashioned by wonted technique to loveliness, capture us quite apart from pedantical question of agreement with their implicit doctrine.

So, the three papers discussing the religious burden of Schiller, Goethe and Meredith were written very much in the same spirit as most of the essays, constituting a book now out of print, entitled: "Modern Poet-Prophets", which met with many kind welcomes from reviewers, alike those who accepted and those who rejected our presuppositions. For surely it must be of no inconsiderable value to ascertain exactly what the great poets thought, as poets, of the soul, of immortality, of righteousness, of God? When the great poets confront for themselves, and as poets, the religious, ethical and aesthetical ultimates, and give a luminous and persuasive account of what they behold and believe, their vision and faiths have at least the authority inherent in their supra-normal sensibility, their richer organic response to ideas, their conscious need for truly adorable ideals, and their imaginative ability to juxtapose all values for a relative reappraisement. What a poet, as a poet, thinks and sings of the soul, of immortality, of good, and of God, may

not perhaps determine his distinctive and aesthetic contribution; but surely it must greatly qualify and tend to define his relation with lettered as well as unlettered mankind. A Sophocles, a Dante, a Milton, an Omar, without just their special and admitted attitudes toward things human and divine, might conceivably be as great, nay greater, artists in verse, and in their several poetic *genres;* but they would indubitably make quite another and very likely a less significant and perennial appeal.

Such, then, is the only needed justification for inquiries of this kind; and one, we fancy, which even the 'Art-for-Art's-sake' partisan may be induced to admit; however much he himself, quite properly, prefers to examine and commend other aspects of poetic performance.

The remaining papers in this compilation, two on Blake, one on Whitman, and one on Maeterlinck and Henry Mills Alden as literary mystics, may vex a few readers who are moved perhaps to approval and sympathy by the earlier portions of our volume. Absurd enough, indeed, seems Emerson's claim for Swedenborg, when he set him with Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, and Goethe, as a poet, on the vertiginous summit of Parnassus. A mystic, who, God-intoxicated, sees wondrous visions but cannot indue them with beautiful form for the enraptured eye and ear, is no wise a poet, however meritorious a teacher, and effective a religious inspirer. But if a mystic should somehow,

by special grace divine, compass a modicum of Art, he is likely to obtain a place so high as to dwell far above the perfect technicians, who utter no palpitating words, and he will come thus to rank only a little lower than the Archangels of Sublimest Art; in some instances, winning more ardent devotion than his poetic betters from such as intimately know and esteem his work. It is strangely interesting to note how from anthology to anthology William Blake grows in representation,—until he, known but little a while ago only for his "Tiger, Tiger" and his "Little Lamb", is, in a recent one, allowed twice as many poems as Robert Burns!

To the writer of these papers, however, unconscious of any partiality to mysticism, *per se*, Blake and Goethe, Whitman and Sophocles, must approve themselves at the same bar of criticism:—to serve man best as Poets, and in Blakean phrase "the best, most",—being the assumed safest token of abiding greatness. Blake, with the Rossettis, Swinbourne, Richard Garnett, ay, and Stopford Brooke, for sponsors, has surely achieved a place of his own among our lyrical poets, whatever Professor Basil de Lelincourt, as devil's advocate, may academically adduce to the contrary. Whitman may comport himself after all as no more than an ancestor; but, even then, he would be worthier of consideration than an effete scion of ancient lineage. And oh, to think of the future society of Daughters Pre-Adamite and Sons of

Calamus! If Whitman's aesthetic theories be erroneous, so were assuredly those of Wordsworth and Browning. Of few poets can more than a fractional portion of their entire output deserve to be called poetry, and included in the "World's Larger Bible"; and if the fraction be proportionately large, then the total published product no doubt has been exceedingly exiguous! Let of Whitman much or little be reckoned amiss, and mercifully dropped in the poke of oblivion, yet notwithstanding, enough will remain to elicit admiration and give delight, whatever else may happen incidentally to our hostile canons and sorely perplexed categories of literary excellence.

Not flaunting any perverse or specious heterodoxy, nor acknowledging any extravagant cult, the latter papers are included without any sense of apology due. The same attitude was in their instance adopted, as in those on Goethe and Schiller, universally accepted classics. Always the negative had the burden of the proof; always a personal sympathy was granted the benefit of the doubt in controversy with temperamental antipathy. If Maeterlinck should seem to be exceptionally dealt with, the comparison was not instituted to extol Mr. Alden's work by the method of unfair contrast, but merely to call attention to our current misconceptions, with regard to the philosophic and religous implications of the famous Fleming's plays and essays. Many have beheld his mysteries, and, duly mystified, have ever after-

ward adopted a tone of pious hushed awe in the discussion of the same. That Maeterlinck exploits our instinctive respect for mysticism, and our religious reverences for a novel shudder or tremulous revery; that he obscures and confuses moral values in his predilection for silvery twilights and purple gloamings of sensibility; that his transcendentalism is pessimistic, rather than, as commonly assumed, an elevation quite superhuman, indicative of a vital need to pass beyond the seen into the unseen; so much could be more effectively affirmed by comparison with the attitude of the American's work; which, if it be held inferior for grace and magnetic charm, is on the other hand, most evidently symptomatic of a much sounder moral and spiritual constitution.

Such are the three parts of this volume; modest by-products of a teacher's and lecturer's activities. Now, to whom should the whole be fitly dedicated, if not to those who followed the lecturer from year to year, or who were his fellow students in the classroom? To them, therefore, in gratitude, the fate of this publication is committed, without begging of favor, or contrite fears of ill-desert. And to them left nameless, for various and manifest reasons, herewith be the volume inscribed.

WILLIAM NORMAN GUTHRIE.

Sewanee, Tennessee, July, 1911.

THE VITAL STUDY OF LITERATURE.

I.

SELF-COMPLACENT illiteracy in educated adults is supposed to be an incurable disease. "I don't like poetry," the sagacious man will tell you, is quite as final a verdict as "I don't like young onions." To be sure, it is useless to argue about tastes. Yet one may appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober. If your arrogant damner of art can be brought to realize that his anathemas hurt none but himself, he may try what a few beatitudes, devoutly uttered, might do to improve the situation. If he comes back with a disagreeable impression from the paradise of so many great souls, whom he hypocritically admits to be greater than himself, may it not be the bad company he has traveled with? or his absent-minded absorption, or his undue haste, that are to blame? or perchance the green goggles he habitually wore to prevent his seeing things rose-colored, like happy young folk? or perhaps that he never visited the country at all, and wrongs his own judgment and healthy power of perception by the promulgation of hearsay?

How many an adult of literary disposition and inborn aptitude for appreciating the noblest works of poetic art will admit that he never, since he

left school, read any work on English literature but Taine's "History" in Van Laun's translation? And what other handbook should he have read? If he picked up any by the pedagogues and critics of international repute, an intuition, self-preservative and tyrannous, made him quickly lay it down. And well for him, doubtless, that he obeyed. It might have extinguished what flame of æsthetic fire did yet flicker in his secret soul.

The truth about the matter is, literature cannot be directly taught. It is not a science. Nor is it, so far as academic instruction goes, an art. Literature is a collective name for masterpieces of literary art. The art might and doubtless should be taught creatively as are other arts, not to increase the quantity of production—but secure a proper diffusion of humility, and teach genius to put up long at a certain inn—whose swinging sign is a poke or waste basket of vast proportions. But, for the unprofessional, masterpieces of literary art should be objects of enjoyment, rather than of study. The teaching required is a personal preparation for enjoyment. The understanding of a poem, as a piece of writing, versifying, thinking, feeling, is not identical with the enjoyment of it; and its *raison d' être* is not the former but the latter. The latter does imply the former; and yet is it not true that the former (the understanding) is not to be got so much from a vivisection of the poem (sure to become an autopsy before the student knows it), as from the

proper education of the student in certain elementary arts and sciences, or even more probably by his lessons in life's school of experience? For one who gets a love of Milton's epic from parsing a speech of Satan, or the old-fashioned, primitive memorizations, there are thousands who ever after secretly congratulate themselves that they do not write like Milton. Fortunately for them, his fame is such that they may safely neglect to read his works. Doré will suffice—and the school memories of syntactic involution! Besides, well-bred people never discuss the classics—only writings warranted ephemeral and interesting!

It is not that adults lack time, "habits of study," or capacity for continuous attention, for self-compulsion. No. They cheerfully labor at their callings in and out of season. They will acquire a science or an art as a personal accomplishment. But then some definite use is in view: an increase of power, a display of personal excellence. Now, why then is literature so rarely the diversion of the busy man's leisure hours—his opiate, his stimulant, his food of the spirit? Those of us who know what literature has been to leaders of men in the past; how, directly or indirectly, from it, the preserver and transmitter of our racial achievement, all of character almost and conduct do as a matter of fact ultimately derive; those of us who have, not just professionally as teachers, critics, litterateurs, but personally as men and women, drunk freely of those waters of life, and

been refreshed, intoxicated—nay, renewed—as though, indeed, they were love-philters drawn from the fount of eternal youth;—how can we help lamenting that so many about us refuse to drink with us to their health and our happiness of this well at the world's end and the soul's new beginning?

How can we not wish to do something to cure their self-complacent, willful illiteracy? And who is to blame for the disease, if such it be? Who, if not the teacher, the critic, the litterateur? Their sins of commission and their sins of omission are indeed grievous. What was done at school for the adult of to-day? What were his text-books? Is their memory fragrant? And since he has been out of school, what book about English literature has been put into his hands which, vitally interesting in its conception and execution, showed to him the value of its subject; made him realize his need of acquaintance with the best that has been written? Ah! the truth is, it is just here that he has been irritated. The best? Who was to decide about that? Dead men, or men as good as dead, or himself? And so he concluded, that because he could not accept traditional estimates, he was a peculiar man,—probably blessedly so; one, at all events, that didn't care for poetry except, perhaps, the "Psalm of Life," and of course Shakespeare—in unverified theory.

Literature is for life, not life for literature. This any man is quite clear about who hasn't a

professorial chair in a classic hall. I have to live —earn my living, fulfill my human obligations, and enjoy myself. If you can show me that the study requisite for the enjoyment of literature will help me to enjoy myself, to make myself enjoyable; that literature is capable of liberating new energies in me, communicating to me an else impossible ecstasy; fit me, indeed, for greater efficiency as son, lover, husband, father—nay, as laborer, journeyman, manufacturer, citizen,—because quickening me as man in hitherto undreamed of ways; then it is quite probable that I shall make some effort to verify my dogma (that I do not like poetry), and see whether perhaps I am not mistaken after all. But be it understood, I must be *shown* all this, not told about it. I must be given at least a vicarious experience for provisional faith, till right knowledge can be got for myself with the personal experience of what literature, with proper self-preparation, can do for me. Most likely I read little else than the newspaper, or the cheap magazine made up in large part of illustrations; occasionally a novel that is forced upon me by the clamors of my friends and neighbors, and more in self-defense than out of curiosity, be it confessed. At school, at college, I never really received pleasure from any literature. I heard a great deal of praise of what I did not like. It has, however, occurred to me that with the advent of maturer years I might perhaps be able to agree with some of those then apparently quite extrava-

gant estimates. Masterpieces, naturally enough, make demands of me proportional to their greatness. I am prepared for that. Nothing worth having is got without effort. You can't climb a mountain as easily as you can fall to the earth from a balloon. What is the line of least resistance for me, the easiest and quickest ascent? I want a guidebook; not an omniscient "Murray," but a plain, practical "Baedecker." Yes, but then my mind is not wholly made up. The "Baedecker" is dry reading. Besides, I can't make my own itinerary, and who is going to be my "Cook?"

II.

Well, there are books of travel, the experiences and opinions of men who have seen for themselves. Ah, yes, the essayists! Of course, if they do not merely repeat the traditions of the elders, their authority is that of private judgment. If only they are honest with me, however, and allow me to understand what manner of men they themselves are, I can make needful allowance for difference in point of view. But the "ipse dixit" of an Arnold is not likely to satisfy me. The methods of the wine taster applied to landscape or poetry are likely to arouse good-humored mirth at a critic's expense, even if he be in his own right a poet of distinction. "Is Niagara great? Call to mind that sunrise you saw in the Alps. Do they affect you similarly? If so, Niagara, though

so recent an addition to the list of nature's wonders, is classic!" Besides, I cannot, as a man of the world, help calling into question a man's loves. There is the craze and the fad. Men want a thing not because it is good (though it may be so), but for the reason that others want it; such are the sheep. Or men want a thing to be singular, just because others don't want it; such are the goats. So I, who have a partiality for neither sheep nor goats; who am a man, or try to be one, and pity the sheepish craze, and despise the capricious fad, cannot help being doubtful of literary exhorters, special pleaders, apologetes, even when I am confident they are not mere exploiters of good subjects. True enough that whatever a living man praises must have contributed something to his life, but does he give me a fair account of the "good it has done him" to adopt Matthew Arnold's witticism? At all events, because the essayist had a confined subject, I have little chance for ascertaining how much of craze or fad there is involved in his estimate.

As for a man's hates, they are of course far less reliable than his loves. What he loves he may be quite right about, as nine times out of ten he is; what he hates he is sure to be wrong in, ten times out of nine. There is ignorance, prejudice, mistaken theory of its object's inconsistency with what he loves, incompatibility of temper, temperamental incapacity; yes, there is so much that will account for the hatred more easily than the vice

or defect of the hated, that, as a man of the world, I pay little heed to polemics, diatribe, denunciation. Let Swinburne talk of Byron's "dirty, draggle-tail drab of a muse," and I will laugh at Swinburne, even though I should never read my Byron.

I turn again to the "manuals of literature." They will give me Pisgah-sights of the promised land. Alas! these handbooks turn out upon inspection to be not manuals of literature at all, though in their way erudite and meritorious. (1) They are histories of literary production, rather than histories of literature. They show how certain times were marked by the making of certain sorts of works in prose or verse. They show how the intellectual history of the nation can be learned by a careful scrutiny of these works in chronological order. (2) Or our handbooks are biographical dictionaries of authors arranged in order of birth. I am shown how the men, being what they were (literary gossip), wrote certain works (symptoms); or *vice versa,* gossip was wrong; by their fruits ye shall know them, the knowledge of the dead wood being the reason for tasting the preserved fruit, rather than appetite or gormandise. (3) Or our handbooks are scrupulous studies of the development of literary forms—how, for instance, the drama came to be what it was in Shakespeare's hands, and therefore how it can or can't become this or that in the future; as though we should study the bottles,

their origin and destiny, rather than drink the good wines contained. (4) Or our handbooks are attempts to show by structural and stylistic criticism that there never really were any literary masterpieces; that men of genius are, however, alive to-day who doubtless could (and would but for lack of time and inclination) create substitutes for the much discredited classics!

More probably our handbooks are all of these things at once. Better, surely, for my purposes (poor academic outcast that I am) would have been the old-fashioned cemetery, where the epitaphs on dead authors' monuments were strictly anonymous, and a glimpse of the dry bones (called "beauties") given through a becoming crack in each tomb. At least, such manuals suggested wholesome meditations on the vanity of fame and modern progress in the embalmer's art.

The truth is, I, the unpedantical ordinary man, want vital criticism based on principles for which the justification is in me. It is I, the consumer, that am to be considered, not the producer. It is not Milton's fame that is to be fostered, but my life that is to be made more abundant. What can I (not you, O pedant, O pensioner of the Muses, but I) get from such and such masterpieces? That is the question I want answered. What are they really about, those masterpieces you are paid to commend and bewilderingly annote? What do I need to know, in what mood must I be, to enjoy them by myself, without your intruded company?

Quick, what attitude must I take toward them? for if I expect a funeral oration, a jest will affect me as unseemly. Don't tell me what those masterpieces are not, but what they are. Please don't compile a list of works I needn't read, telling me why I needn't or oughtn't to; but furnish me a descriptive catalogue of works which, if I love my soul, I must read. Which will be likely to liberate energy? which to produce ecstasy? Which will conduct my passions innocuously out of reality into the safe world of day-dream and vision? which excite me, save me from lethargy, paralysis, coma? Which will produce that quiet felicity, that reasonless jubilation for which there are no words? that panic at the presence of the divine? Ah! and while you do all this, dear mentor, or part of this, for me—making allowance for varieties of temperament, for difference of age, prescribing the favorable conditions—I absolutely insist on being entertained. My informer, to be trustworthy when his report is "of beauty," must make me believe he has blood in his veins like myself, not ink or midnight oil; solid flesh under sensitive skin, not paper pulp bound in cloth, calf, sheep, or morocco. In plain words, he must know whereof he speaks, and love it with the love that passes knowledge; know me and love me, who am to listen with a passion appropriate to my righteous self-love; know how to speak, and love to speak. If not, pray let him be silent. He is a thief, with designs on my pocketbook, and I should be foolish indeed were I to lend him mine ears.

As for the principles governing the selection of subjects for presentation and judicious yet enthusiastic praise, shall they be esoteric, the secrets of academic hierophants; shall they be always substantiated only by references to the "lost Vedas?" Must they not, if they are to win my provisional confidence, be such as I can verify in myself and my common world of men? principles of large application, axiomatic, or at least corollaries to theorems which, upon some reflection, common sense adorns with a cheerful Q. E. D.? For whether literature be or be not the criticism of life, life most assuredly is and must be the criticism of literature. I will not live in a tomb, not even a Pharaoh's of the most famous dynasty, though a pyramid commanding the attention of the entire tourist world. I prefer my hovel of mud-plastered logs, my children about my knees, and my wife laughing at their nonsensical prattle and mischievous pranks. It is in my living human nature and that of my fellows that the data for the critic's judgments must be found, if I am to lend them provisional credence. Only such a handbook as does this, and declares itself frankly, can help me to recant manfully, and admit that under certain conditions I do love, should, could, or at least would love poetry if I could.

But what are, in the opinion of the writer of this paper, these principles, and where are they to be studied? Manifestly at the book shop, the

news stand, the office of the public library. Observe how mankind selects among books of contemporary authorship, for which no ancient fame imposes artificial reverence. Every one has noticed that the book of which but a few years ago, perhaps, several hundred thousand copies were sold is never to-day in demand. No one speaks of it; no one insists that you *must* read it. Everybody seems to have forgotten that it was once on every table, in every mouth. How is this? My bookseller tells me that more recent books have taken the popular fancy. So I discover at once the *law of death.* Other things being equal, the newest novel is the best. Old books are good not because of their age, but in spite of it. Their survival is a proof that new books are not their equals in some important respects; for only if the old gives what the new cannot supply does it continue to find readers. The greater the output of novels the higher the mortality rate. A work of fiction which in these days of excessive production and publication retains a respectable body of readers is not without singular merit of some sort. Now, I, the common man, begin to understand why the classics are *probably* great. If they are not now mere fossils stored in glass cases of scholarly museums, if they are really living creatures still, great and wonderful must be, indeed, in them the spirit of life.

But what is it that causes certain books to retain attention even when novelty is worn off?

Why can they successfully compete with each annual generation begotten and born and reared to commercial importance expressly for the lucrative diversion of the injudicious public? Why is it that as a rule the public preserves just those books that were not written for its sake? Is it that, after all, the public is deeper, truer, sincerer than it seems? that what is not deep, true, and sincere in it is essentially capricious? that what therefore only satisfies the peculiar craving of to-day cloys, palls—nay, nauseates—on the morrow? And that some of the books, written from a necessity to write, may have come from the deep, true, and sincere in their authors, and therefore appeal to what is permanent in man, and obtain—not the loud hysterical applause,—but the praise of the still small voice which speaks in divers accents, but always to the same purpose:—the best good of what is best in man?

III.

The fact, then, seems to be that a novel (taking the most alive of literary species as our instance) subserves confessedly many uses as an article of commerce quite distinct from its value as a work of art. It is a patch of color on the shelf or table; a paper-weight for perfumed billet-doux; if not too heavy, something to hold in the hand in lieu of a fan; a symbol of leisure and gilded ennui; an excuse for a bookplate and the display of a purchased coat of arms; an economical holiday gift;

a subject for cultured chitchat; an occasion for the display of the nil-admirari spirit; something to recommend, like a favorite drug to an acquaintance as inexpensive proof of sincere good will; a means of enforcing Shakespeare's maxim, "Never a lender, *but* a borrower be!" These uses (and we are too civilized, urbane and genial to deny their importance) are not assuredly literary uses of books. They may increase the demand for the publisher's wares—nay, affect the supply thereof—but they have little to do with the *law of selection,* perpetually at work, the *law of death.* The illiterate often fancy that only defunct books are called classics, as for many and sufficient reasons only the safely departed are canonized. But the truth is that only living books deserve and usually obtain the coveted designation, as only those men who live in the hearts of mankind as an inspiration are the saints to whom churches are dedicated and for whom asylums and hospitals are named. But why, then, does the novel fresh from the press often obtain a reading in preference to the tried and tested predecessor? Is it that, like Emerson, we are always on the lookout for a great man, and suspect that some hero's heart is beating under every little boy's tight-buttoned waistcoat? I think not. Rather is it to satisfy our curiosity, and give us a calmly joyful sense of being up to date. Now note that a book cannot under any circumstances do this more often than once in one season. If a book

does this and this only, or nothing else peculiarly well, it is promptly consigned to oblivion. And that, thank heaven, is the death warrant of most publications.

But a book gives me something besides. I experience as I toboggan down its steeps a delicious excitement, a thrill, a quite extraordinary experience. In daily life I know always what to expect. I am therefore thankful for the suspense, the agony, the surprise. Besides, the dime museum of monstrosities gives me as an after effect a profound satisfaction with myself the normal man, leading a normal life, in which premises lead to conclusion, causes imply consequences, on a planet where no ironic or freakish fate pulls the wires for the production of too ingenious coincidences. If a book, however, does this and this only, or nothing else peculiarly well, it will be soon superseded, because a sensation is relatively easy to produce, and there are many who wield the pen for a livelihood not without skill or courage.

Furthermore, perhaps a book mirrors some phase of me to myself—exactly my present thoughts, my present feelings. Ha, go to, I, even I, am in print! Really, then, I must be of public interest. My vanity is nourished with lickerish tidbits. But alas for this sycophant of a book, I am fickle! Just because it flatters me to-day, it will seem tedious, superficial, insipid next year. Unless I have ceased to grow, I shall soon have found its garment of praise a shameful misfit

If, then, a book reflects the features of my opinion, the complexion of my mood, and has won favor on that sole account, doing me no nobler service, its author may charge me with ingratitude; yet I shall soon hold his work in derision, or smile indulgently at best on its disappointed pretenses to further consideration.

But maybe the book in question does more than this: it champions some cause to which I am wedded, and I love him for my bride's sake. It promotes my vested interests and has a clear title to a commission. It inculcates my dogma of social salvation as an active proselyter, subtly didactic, persuasive, an incarnate homily; and I disburse the price of the book as gladly as I contribute to the support of foreign missionaries, or pay my assessment toward a political campaign fund. But note: Many will find themselves called to preach lucratively, and the talent required for respectable success as pedagogue or advocate is by no means uncommon. The very fact that I purchase this book, recommend it to my friends—nay, present an entire edition of it to such as are likely converts, and such things have happened in the memory of living man—ay, this very consideration will make it worth somebody's while to supersede my skilful and valiant defender and spreader of the faith with a more up-to-date knight of the moon.

Finally a book does all or none of the above adventitious delightsome things, but inexpen-

sively equips me with a convenient gallery of caricatures. All the people I meet are there. It furnishes me whimsical names wherewith I may designate them behind their backs. My vocabulary of urbane abuse is appreciably enlarged. In other words, my gossip-passion is gratified—it leads me to believe that I know my neighbor so much better than he knows me. If a book does this and this only, and nothing else peculiarly well, it may live for a time. The cartoonist, however, is born anew in every generation. Surely I shall find my children preferring another book, and only yawning respectfully when I expatiate on its truth, its humor, its wit, its wisdom. Gossip stales. The affectations and mannerisms of one age are unfortunately not those of another. Our own seem charming, or at all events excusable, but who will condone those of other times? Local color, so called, has its dangers. It may be too local. Besides, it will not be gossip any more when the folk of whom it tells too distinctly are dead! Unless, therefore, these likenesses have independent value as portraits, who will admit them to his gallery, even should it be explained to him that they were sat for by the eminent maternal great uncle, or the ladylike paternal great aunt of his whilom next-door neighbor?

Now who is so bold or so ignorant as to deny that a large share in the "success" of any novel is due to novelty, surprise, flattery, doctrinal message, and hitting off people? Yet surely these

attributes and powers altogether never secured longevity for a book, and certainly not what is facetiously termed immortality. In judging of literature my desired handbook must, therefore, be careful to exclude all books contemporary or of the past, which have no better claims to consideration.

But how shall we arrive at some positive principles of selection? Examine the works that have lived and compare them with works, contemporary to them, that have perished? Yes. Of course. What else would you do? Verify, however, your conclusions by the psychology of readers—readers for pleasure, æsthetic and vital profit—yourself if you choose, the victim of your vivisections; but let it be yourself as private reader, not as professional assenter or dissenter, as rattler of dead bones, collector of curios, or as intellectual prestidigitator and moral contortionist. If the examination is made patiently, without prejudice, fear, or favor, something like the following principles will be finally set forth as a critical working hypothesis.

IV.

Well, then let us boldly italicize and itemize: *Characteristics Promoting Literary Longevity.*— First, the *stuff* (subject, idea) must be thoroughly mastered, understood, grasped. If not, every Saturn breeds his Jove. The work advertises the stuff, subject, and idea, and ere long it will find

another student who can present his truer view as attractively.

Secondly, the *composition* of the elements or parts of the stuff (subject or idea) must be significant, interesting, lovely, beautiful, or sublime. Such a juxtaposition of elements must be devised, such a combination of foreground and background, such a fusion of various interests effected, that the whole shall satisfy, give delight, haunt the memory, require fresh vision from time to time.

These two attributes of a literary work (mastery of the stuff, and proper composition) are prior to the actual writing—belong to the mental and passional, not to the verbal poem, drama, novel, essay.

Thirdly, the *construction* of the written work, its plan, plot, argument, scheme, must be such that, however complex, it shows certain grand simple lines which secure a sense of unity for it, a pleasure to the reader in its retrospective contemplation as a whole. The interest must be continuous, not diverted or dispersed. The center of gravity must be safely within the base of the structure. And this, because it will thus be best remembered when its details are forgotten. It will hold its own in memory, be cherished so, spoken of, and purposively recalled. Perfect construction would imply that every character, incident, descriptive touch, digression of sentiment or passion, should be directly contributory

to the idea, plan, plot, argument, or scheme of the whole.

Fourthly, the *style* of the book, that is to live long, must be such as yields a characteristic delight. Mere transparency is no merit, nor opaqueness for the matter of that, either. Individuality, appropriateness to subject, mood, structure of the work, charms not exhausted at the first perusal, reserve force, riches stowed underground to reward delving, violets under wayside hedges to which vague fragrance draws the leisurely passer-by; all significant of lavish love, of exuberant creative energy. For such style contributes to survival because it tantalizes in memory, cries for a rereading and obtains it sooner or later. Strange how Carlyle's idiosyncratic dialect adds to the greatness of "Sartor Resartus" and detracts from his history of the French Revolution! Yet, not strange. In the first case the style suits the theme; in the second case we are not so sure that it does.

The works of literary art that have come down to us with the greatest fame possess these four characteristics all in some degree, or if some one is conspicuously absent then the "lack" is made up for by "luck," and the others are conspicuously present. Yet these four principles will not be found altogether sufficient to explain the selection that has actually taken place in the past, or to serve as a safe and sane criterion of contemporary literature.

Fifthly, then we must make mention of the fact that (deplorable to some) in the *progress of mankind* certain moral changes do take place. What was once foible is now vice. To give direct offense to me morally is to render me in that degree æsthetically insensible. Pain neutralizes pleasure. Or perchance the change of custom and manner is such that antiquarian research is requisite for intelligent appreciation. Then, whatever its other merits, it becomes literature exclusively for professional or amateur antiquarians. So, a Hamlet is to-day more to us than an Othello, though the latter masterwork is perhaps the greater of the two structurally, and in the other three respects its equal. Jealousy is no longer, in its extreme manifestation, sympathetic to us. We are for Iago, with all his villainy, rather than for the Moor in his brutal violence. So also a Flaubert elaborately produces a historic novel, "Salammbo;" and, attempting the recreation of the past in its singularity and obsolete detail, runs great risk of not recreating his cultured reader, which was incontestably his first duty.

Ha, but who shall predict the course of human progress? There are occasional revivals. History repeats itself? True. Yet certain steps are taken finally for the great majority of readers. Therefore certain otherwise excellent works must alas! suffer partial or total neglect. What will it avail, for instance, to praise composition, construction, style of a play by Terence which takes

for granted the innocence of what is to us monstrous, and requires admiring sympathy for a criminal in his very most abhorrent and loathsome crime? But this the learned erudite specialist protests is not just to Terence! Ay, ay, but who cares egregiously for Terence and his claims, said estimable playwright having had his full due long since? It is not just to me, the living man, to recommend that fundamentally indecent play as a work of beauty. True, the morality and the beauty are in theory distinct; but I, the living reader, am not built on the compartment plan—I cannot cease to be the moral man while I am the æsthete. Justice to the living and oblivion, if need were, to the dead! Only those works of the dead that live and have a right to live shall be part of our educational curriculum. Such will be our principle of criticism in this respect, offend whom it may.

Yet clearly here we find ourselves ill prepared to administer the law to contemporary works. We are much too blind to our special vanities, affectations, singularities, prejudices to resent them unless grossly obtruded. How much of our beloved Browning, Ibsen, Meredith, Hugo, Balzac, which is else most justifiable, will perish on this count? How much will cease to be read, simply because the ship of culture must at all cost be lightened, even if some treasures go overboard? Yet what cause for pride when even masterpieces can thus be sacrificed! The seas are ever

smoother, the ship is not in peril. No, it means that so much that is excellent has been since produced. So much! What a grand suggestion of the vitality of the race! Genius, like the sun, darts rays into planetless void—reckless, for it needs not to reckon. "Bring forth weight and measure in a year of dearth," cries the inspired Blake. Overboard then with whatever we dare dispense with—and fear not, for below deck new and greater poets will be born—with or without consent of the literary Cerberus!

Sixthly, we ought to admit there is an *adventitious value*—usually the creation of humanity, not consciously at all events of the author. We have read something so long into a work, that now we read it out of it. How long shall we continue to do so? That is the question. Forever, doubtless, if there is any reasonable excuse for so doing. What makes us love Don Quixote? Its interest as a burlesque? Hardly. A good burlesque, in so far as it slays its enemy, commits harakiri promptly thereafter. What is a burlesque without the popularity of its victim? Does it charm, as a story, by sheer interest in the happenings of the human agents as persons: Don Quixote of the sorrowful countenance, or even Sancho of the paunch? Hardly. Ah! but as a symbolic expression of the two parts of man, the idealistic element, the materialistic element; the brave, loyal love of principle so usually blind to facts and incapable of learning from painful

experience; the cowardly, sensual love of self, shrewd, gifted with mother wit, but needing sorely elevation by constant commerce with the nobler element: how as an externalization of our spiritual life, as our own self-knowledge writ large—ah; how it does appeal to us, how its "echoes roll from soul to soul!" passing far beyond the bookish circle, filling the great round world! Yet, who of Pindian weather prophets could have foreseen all this? Cervantes in the first part of his immortal romance *meant* to kill a craze, and in the second to kill a hero imprudently left alive for the use of others less skillful than our author!

Summing up what we have said, it is clear that our ascertained canons of criticism, (1) grasp of stuff, (2) composition, (3) construction, (4) style, (5) modernity, (6) symbolic suggestiveness, are not all applicable with equal ease or certainty. The best care, sanity and sweet æsthetic savour, will not avoid errors altogether.

At all events, our manual is to care nothing for historic, biographic, traditional estimates; to set down everything according to its possession in greater or less degree of these attributes conducive to literary longevity. Yet shall not the compiler of our handbook dare, not merely to pass over in silence a Butler's "Hudibras," a Young's "Night Thoughts," the rhymed romances of Byron; but, on the other hand, attempt a bold advertisement of certain forgotten masterpieces that

died not by demerit, for lack of the qualities that endear when known, but by the ill chance which failed to accord them a reasonable initial publicity? Assuredly our descriptive catalogue of great works, when perfected, will need supersession, and shortly, too, by a better and wiser one; but will it not be something to have served for a day or two the best interest of possible culture? Is it not glory enough to provoke emulation, to compel into existence those that will be more powerful than we? We have toiled, invited Minerva, and lo, from the sea springeth the Cyprian maid herself! This, the reward of all noble literary failure, is the reward for all noble, vital criticism, however brief its terms of authority and credit.

V.

But, in conclusion, it may be objected, a handbook of literature on the lines suggested is only for the adult? The schoolboy, the youth at college, needs what? To be inoculated with a hatred of literature? Yet, wherefore so dogmatically browbeat and impose upon the young? Besides, one cannot really do so. One can only make of them adults who look back at their text-book maker angrily, as the schoolroom tyrant who succeeded in spoiling some part of their golden age, for whom may certain agelong fires be stoked!

If the six principles here set down as an analysis of the main attributes which tend to secure

the survival of literature because, adapting them to what is permanent, or fairly so, in human nature, and which, therefore, govern the natural selection in books; if these six principles be found reasonably correct; if the survival of literary works is in the main that of the fittest; if works that show the six above attributes, or a goodly number of them, to a remarkable degree, ought to be regarded as worthy of dignified yet wide-awake advertisement, because probably fit for revival, the mere victims of minor accidents;—then surely a manual of English literature for adults needs to be written on such lines, and manuals for school and college also, remembering to allow for age and temperament; *descriptive catalogues*—that is to say, claiming besides to be no more, and able therefore to quicken the desire for diligent reading, and proportionate understanding and enjoyment! And is it mere Quixotism to break a lance in such a cause? Is it mad optimism to believe that when such works, successful perhaps only after repeated failure, have come into general use the race of educated illiterates will become so well-nigh extinct as to justify the preservation of some specimens in every well-supplied zoological collection?

TRANSLATION: A METHOD FOR THE VITAL STUDY OF LITERATURE.

I. The Pedagogical Problem.

Not only is the poet born such, but the lover of poetry likewise cannot, in popular opinion, be created by any educational method hitherto discovered. This much truth there seems to be in the hopeless view of them that love not the Muses: that just as the poet requires for his prime endowment a kindled imagination, so the would-be lover of poetry needs to have his imagination kindled, either by the haphazard of personal experience at the due time of susceptibility, or rather by the transmission from another of the kindling sacred fire. No teacher, however accomplished and painstaking, will succeed in the matter of creating the love of great poetry, or bringing even to a personal consciousness of the worth for the pupil of high literary art, unless there be occasions artfully found or created for the transmission of the divine fire of worship.

Just, however, as the scholar starts out with the assumption that the truth can be known, so the teacher should profoundly believe that his "subject" can be taught; and in the case of the teacher of literature, his "subject" is really the "appre-

ciation of an Art, and its products" or—and we tremble at the portentous suggestion,—better still, "the pursuit of the art in efforts at production." It will be at once objected by the facetious, that we have poets, litterateurs and amateurs in a sufficient number to cause anxiety—a case already of over-production! The solemn reply to a jest is proof of dullness. The real superfluity we endure is in talent untrained, or in talent overtrained because mistakenly self-trained by methods that exhaust inspiration in pedantry; or else our superfluity consists in talent prostituted, at least vulgarized, by the demand of those who can read and write and reckon, but are none the less of the profane.

It should be possible to do at all events for Literary Art, what is done for the formal and decorative arts in countless studios, schools and institutes. What of the great expenditures of talent, enthusiasm, and funds in the teaching of the most spiritual of the arts—music? It is foolish to keep on quoting by rote "*poeta nascitur non fit.*" What of artists in the other arts not less divine? Apparently no such absurd overstatement of the necessity of inspiration is made to serve as a suicidal pedagogic assumption in the case of those other arts. Aspirants after excellent performance, or merely appreciation sane and inspiring, are procured the conditions of apprenticeship, based on the needs of the artistic temperament in the average instance as ascertained from experience. Why should literary art continue to be con-

sidered an absolute exception, in that, those desirous of its service are condemned to costly autodidactic experimentation? Because genius does occasionally win against enormous odds sensational victory on behalf of the race, shall we be cursed —not with "mute inglorious Miltons" but—with the pathetic wrong-headedness of misdirected ambition, the morose mediocrity of exhausted talent, the commercialized cleverness of improvisations, which are so clearly due, in large measure, to an inadequate culture and improper apprenticeship in his youth of the aspirant to fame?

In a previous paper have been stated, perhaps too tartly, what seem to be the characteristics of the Classic; and what, therefore, are the qualities to be sought for his product by the literary craftsman. But the problem still remains, how to eliminate the conceit and vanity—the self-conscious idiosyncrasy of the student—and secure his scholarly and business-like application to the mastery of his technique. Since, however, no teacher of literature at any college avows the deliberate purpose to-day of producing literary creators,—only at best refined appreciators, or may be pedantic water-witches, duly Ph.D'd, divining subterranean sources—it would be expedient if we stated frankly that the literary creator and the literary appreciator are not so far removed from one another as at first glance may appear.

If I am to enjoy a written poem to the fullest possible degree, it must be that, through the me-

dium of suggestive rhythms, rhymes and tone color, through collocations of word-meanings, and usage associations, I am stirred to re-create the poet's creation, to visualize, thrillingly realize, compose, construct, give enchanting verbal and tonal expressions to the central idea; except that the process is not thus analyzed, or followed in strict logical sequence, or in any necessary close conformity with that of the original poet himself. The same poem gives me each time a different complex happiness, so that clearly all sorts of variety is allowed in the process of re-creation, whereby the poem of the poet becomes my poem, and I its second poet for the nonce. The first poet differs from me, his sympathetic reader and the second poet, only in the fact that he was first to discover, to initiate, combine, devise, experience surprise, and thrill with inspiration. Besides, the sense of origination, of aesthetic pioneership, gave him a consciousness of unconscious power, for which I, his reader, must substitute worship of his vicarious genius, if I am to compass the gross equivalent for his large delight. If re-creation be then but secondary creation, we need merely distinguish between primary and secondary creation; and, while not presuming to produce or train genius as such, we can study how to teach "creation," without regard to originative genius. So, then, the genius will thereby obtain help for his work of origination, and the man of less extraordinary ability will be brought to understand po-

etic art from the poet's point of view. The latter will be better fitted to enjoy his earned place as appreciator and patron of the art, not less rightfully *his* art in virtue of his ability to reproduce into glorious fullness for himself the beauty of the original work of his contemporary, with calm confidence in his own spontaneous yet trained sympathy as superior to any post-mortem health certificate called a favorable critical judgment; since from the nature of the case such a critical judgment absolutely precludes and renders superfluous any fraternal assistance on the part of the man of taste to the living artist, his brother of more temperament and vital propulsion!

Supposing it to be granted by our reader, for argument's sake at least, that the teacher of literature should make it his chief aim to impart such training as will subserve the needs alike of the primary and the secondary creator, we are then face to face, only, with a practical question of pedagogical method. It might be shown how after a careful scrutiny of the field of masterpieces, cases rare, yet sufficiently numerous, offer themselves, for our purpose, of poems in the making. We have Chaucer's two versions of his "Prologue to the Legend of Good Women", of which the second so vastly improves on the first, by transposition chiefly of paragraphs. We have similarly the extraordinary example of Wordsworth's intruded eighth stanza to his "Ode to Duty"; of Keats' rejected first stanza to the "Ode on Melancholy". We

have Wordsworth's divers treatment of practically the same material in the agreeable record of a poetic experience entitled: "To a Highland Girl", and in the magnificent lyric poem, full of rhythmic spell power, and inexhaustible suggestiveness, called: "The Solitary Reaper." Such opportunities for intimate glimpses into the holy place of the muses, and into the workshop of their priests, are not so scarce, but what a good teacher, who loves and reasonably well knows the world's great poetry, can keep a class most usefully and delightfully employed for the several years of a University course. The evil, however, of this method, taken by itself, lies in the difficulty of applying any but mechanical, or purely personal tests to the industry, proficiency and good will of the student. Besides, the imaginatively indolent student will content himself with his teacher's analysis, or with his own; and wholly fail to exercise the very faculties it is desired to train, through the means of the merely rational expositions, namely, the imagination, the visual power, and the emotional understanding.

Now, for the student of literature who is so unfortunate as to know one language only, there is no help in the ancient method, which we propose by this paper to advocate and extol. He will have to combine the close observation of literary masterpieces, the memorization of particular Arnoldian tidbits; the exploitation of fortunate instances which are, as aforesaid, after all not so few but

that, with the good student, they will richly suffice to give him an aesthetic comprehension, although perhaps they might leave him unstimulated to realize imaginatively, unless he have imparted to him the personal enthusiasm of his teacher. But the student of literature who has at least the rudiments of another language; who understands, therefore, the relations which always exist between thought and feeling on the one hand, and sounds and words on the other, bound by the arbitrary laws of a particular grammar and syntax, that is to say, of folk-temperament and intellectual or emotional bent and habit; for him becomes available to the full the wondrous pedagogical expedient of translation.

It has been argued from time to time by the fanatic of language-study that literature cannot be taught at all, unless it be literature in a foreign tongue. Only with the difficulties incident to the foreign tongue could that attentive observation of linguistic details be exacted, which is so fundamental to the aesthetic perfection of the artist's great work, and, therefore, to its complete appreciation. This, I fear me, is a desperate plea of the philologian with an accomplishment for sale, in an age that depreciates his divine wares. While the present writer himself is polyglot by birth and rearing, and naturally enough believes, therefore, at least in the cloven tongue, he cannot sincerely allow this argument to be taken for more than its real value. Pedagogical difficulty does not con-

stitute for the good teacher a baffling impossibility. Besides, Spencer, Shakespeare, and Milton have been found in actual experience quite sufficiently foreign for the ordinary college student to require the use of the glossary in a right wholesome frequency, and to parse to his heart's distress for an intelligent report of the particular poems' content and intent. If Chaucer, Browning, Rossetti and Meredith be invoked to the teacher's further aid, in the interest of thoroughness, we do not seriously fear the student will glide along so smoothly through a diction and a syntax too exceedingly familiar, but what his faculties will be kept in a walking alertness!

It is, indeed, too late to praise translation with the hope of being thought original! Down from classic time it was deemed the best expedient.

Practically all culture revivals have begun with translation. But too often in the classroom it has been used as an exercise merely unto the close study of the foreign original, rather than as a means of exigent discipline in the mother-tongue itself.

But furthermore, translations can be collected and criticized, and in some instances produced by teacher and pupil, from the mother-tongue into some foreign language. When Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" is carefully read and scrutinized in German, French, and Italian translations, much is learned as to the untransmissible glories of the original. When Shakespeare is pondered in

Schiller's, Schlegel's or Tieck's German, or Hugo's French, one has novel, very singular and most excitingly profitable experience. Freiligrath's Burns or Byron, ay, and his Tennyson, too, are not to be passed over slightingly; and his "Ancient Mariner" of Coleridge is more instructive for us than Coleridge's "Wallenstein" of Schiller. The collection, collation, and sympathetic examination of versions of given English masterpieces into kindred languages, is then a pedagogical device of great value for deepening and rendering more aesthetically acute and delicate the study of the masterpiece in question.

This use of translation, although approving itself by the very first conscientious experiment, is still, however, not of such a nature as necessarily to stimulate the student's creative imagination. He may make the superiority of his original the basis of a Chauvinistic preference for his mother-tongue. He may study his original word for word, phrase by phrase, and yet keep the critic's attitude only, never himself wrestling with the angel for the divine name. Delille's "Paradise Lost" may deserve for a silly depreciation of Alexandrine couplets only, as compared with Miltonic blank verse, or to strengthen a preposterous provincial prejudice endorsed by the petty Emersonian line:

"France where poet never grew;"—

a line, the truth of which is so evident to such as are not masters enough of French to revel in the magical music of French verse!

Translations, however, into the student's language of foreign classics, which he can also study in the original, serve to correct this unfortunate tendency. It soon appears that all languages are rich and poor by turn. Always the poet knows intuitively or by training the special resources of his instrument, and takes advantage of its native and acquired possibilities, so that, from the nature of the case, no poem is susceptible of a word for word, or phrase by phrase, or even sentence by sentence translation. A boast for instance like that of Mr. Dennis Florence McCarthy that "every speech and fragment of a speech are represented in English by the exact number of lines of the original," and furthermore, as the title-page advertises "in the metre of the original," cannot in the case of Calderon promise success. Conception rather by conception has to be rendered, and not phrase by phrase; and it is purely a matter of coincidence, in rhythmic and metric resources, if a rendering even of line for line is possible. Verbal identities are only sought by the pedant. The man of taste will be happy if he can find equivalences achieved for him, and his experience will have shown him how difficult is the attainment even of reasonably fair equivalences.[1] For, let the familiar truth be spoken once again. If there be, as Archbishop Trench plead,[2] an "intimate coherence between a poem's form and its spirit," and that "*one* cannot be altered

[1] Preface to Calderon's Dramas.

[2] Calderon, His Life and Genius, with Specimens of his Plays, by Richard Chevenix Trench.

without at the same time most seriously affecting the *other,*" this is, indeed, due in large part to the fact that the form is not "as a garment", but "the flesh and blood which the inner soul of it has woven for itself;" which amounts to saying that the experienced possibilities of expression have reacted more or less unconsciously on the poet's particular mode of conception. Had there not offered itself such a fortunate word, such an alluring rhyme, well, the composition might have been altogether other than it is. To insist, then, as the "only principle of all true translation," upon "adherence to the form as well as to the essence of the original," is to ask of a translator more than the poet could himself have originally done in any but his own particular language, no matter what his skill in any other.

Just at this point nothing could be more instructive than to compare the "Youth and Lordship" of Dante Gabriel Rossetti with the Italian original, which his brother positively asserts to have been also his own composition, as made evident by corrected manuscript. It was impossible to translate such brief lines closely, with adherence to metre, and rhyme system; and even apart from that consideration, with a feeling for good taste. What is playful in Italian may be coarse in English. Surely any other poet would proceed like Rosetti, in the translation of his own work to re-visualize and to render conception by conception, and where necessary take from the vision in

the second instance, what would suit the language into which he now renders it, although he might have neglected before to express these newly-chosen elements, and expressed rather some others belonging to the same essential composition.

Pointing to a similar conclusion, we note the striking fact that Rossetti translated into English neither his "Barcarola,"[3] nor his *"Bambino Faciato;"* the first depending so largely on a most fortunate rhyme "tomba-rimbomba," which could not be paralleled in English; and the latter little poem upon a quite praiseworthy and charming frankness, nay, naivete, incident to Italian speech on the subject of paternity and maternity, which could not be compassed by a language bearing still, as doth ours, the scars of the Puritan Movement on its body, and the starch and bluing of a factitious holiness in the singing robes thereof!

Clearly, some theory of translation must be formulated by our students of literature who adopt this pedagogical expedient, which shall be modest enough to make a fair result seem within the regions of the possible. Lord Woodhouselee's well-known Essay[4] (1797) might help in dignifying with classic authority and copious, however old-fashioned, precedent, both good and bad, the Translator's art. Matthew Arnold's still better

[3] *Oltre tomba* — Beyond the tomb.
Qualche cosa? — Is there aught?
Eche ne dici? — And what say you of it?
Saremo felici? — Shall we be happy?
Terra mai posa, — The Earth never resteth,
Emar rimbomba — And the sea, echoing, roareth.

[4] Reprinted, J. M. Dent, "Everyman's Library."

known Essay "On Translating Homer" would serve to correct what in the former may seem eighteenth century predilection for "polite" paraphrase. At all events, once a reasonable theory adopted, which takes into account (to repeat our contention) the indisputable fact, that any poet in his original yielded unwittingly yet really to the demands, or the allurements of his native speech; and would, were he his own translator, do again likewise, only a trifle more consciously, when confronted with the commands and charms of the English muse, to the neglect of any detailed resemblance between his first and his second production;—once then, such an accommodation between the translator and the paraphrast attained in theory, what an astounding education becomes possible in practice for the student of Literature!

Always will the language of the translator seem the more restricted, the less subtle, the less instinct with poetic facility, and felicitous correspondence of sound with sense. How will he not have to study the grand organ, on which, bounden captive of a foreign muse, he must if possible transpose the composition scored for a whole orchestra of strange instruments! And when he has come to perform such feats with reasonable ease, supposing he has a creative imagination at all, how will he not, when deeply stirred, find it easy to improvise on his own account, as the spirit gives him conception and urges him to utterance?

It will be asserted, perhaps, that verse is pos-

sible only to the poet; and, that our college classes are not composed of poets. To this we reply: verse is an accomplishment, possible with fair perfection for any person of reasonable intelligence, if the training be begun early enough in life. There are those who have no ear for pitch, no sense of time, no eye for color. There are, to be sure, defectives, degenerates, idiots. But it will be found that on the whole, a goodly percentage of healthy students do promptly master the art of versification with a fair enough degree of skill to make translation an available pedagogical method.

It may again be asserted, that we shall thus tend to produce countless pretenders, who, *invita Minerva,* will have to pay out of their slender incomes for the appearance from time to time of innocuous volumes of verse which make the trained reviewer smile superciliously as they coyly look up to him from his book-thronged desk. Far be such a malign fate from us! To have acquired the accomplishment of verse, and the practice of translating great poetry, would, if anything, tend to deliver us of poor, therefore, quite useless rhymesters, and bequeath to us in their stead, good and perhaps excellent translators, and benefactors so of such of their fellow-men as cannot "read every language under the sun,—and think and speak and write in none!"

II. Paraphrast and Translator.

Now it might not be amiss, while considering the problem of translation, to make clear once again by illustrations some of the most elementary but therefore often overlooked problems. In attempting of late to teach the Poetry of the Bible, merely as poetry, the present writer was confronted with the serious difficulty, that translations, for instance, of the Psalms, had been made for all purposes rather than that of exhibiting the rhetorical or rather poetic principle on which the effect of the original so largely depends. Coverdale's English is much praised and not without allegeable excuse. But respect for the integral imaginative unity was not in his philosophy, or in that of any scholar of his times. Dr. S. R. Driver's[5] New Version helped much; the virile Dr. T. K. Cheyne more;[6] and Dr. Charles Augustus Briggs[7] occasionally; Mr. Horace Howard Furness (following Wellhausen) more often.[8] Always, however, it was found that the new translators were hindered from producing the desired total impact on an unlearned reader, because the word for word, or even line by line rendering, however idiomatic —on account of the enormous difference of language, implied associations, obsolete religious suggestions,—most grievously under-represent-

[5] Clarendon Press, 1904.

[6] Book of Psalms, Kegan, Paul, Trench & Co. 1880.

[7] Translations in the International Critical Commentary, The Book of Psalms, 2 vols. Scribner's. 1906.

[8] Haupt's Polychrome Bible. Dodd, Mead & Co. 1898.

ed, to a positive poverty, the original poem. More than half their real translations were, besides, in the notes; or implicit in their orientally polite presupposition of an, alas, non-extant Hebraic element in our diffused culture. No doubt the revisers of the Authorized Version supposed that the Bible is *sui generis,* and must be translated without regard to the general principle of prime reverence for idiom in the translator's speech. Since by the felonious practices of the unscholarly theologian, a translation is treated as an infallible, divine document, it becomes, therefore (in the opinion of many), more important to permit of no improper inference from the wording of the translation, than to produce the emotional and imaginative stimulations, and after-glows of feeling, on which, when all is said, the Bible must in the long run depend for its acceptance as literature at all, sacred or profane. To be rendered literally, and set every decent literary tooth on edge,—how conducive to the right devotional spirit! Well, the Revisers were children of their age, and servants, furthermore, not of the Blessed Muses, but of a half-hearted Modernism. So their labors were found far less helpful to the present writer than those of Drs. Cheyne, Driver, Briggs, and the elegant Mr. Furness, whatever the respective demerits of their versions in eyes wonted to the ecclesiastical twilight of the Gods.

The necessity of paraphrase was what bore itself in upon the teacher more and more forcibly.

Nothing, to be sure, must be set down in the free translation that did not, upon careful inspection, seem implied or suggested for any intelligent reader of the Hebrew at the approximate time of the Psalms' composition and living use in temple or synagogue worship. But such implicit elements of the composition as could not to-day be obtained from a close English translation were then to be explicitly supplied, and the whole cast into a loose anapestic verse, such as should, at least, remind us that Hebrew poetry did actually possess an accentual rhythm of its own, however in some respects unlike that adopted by the translator-paraphrast as most suitable for his didactic purpose.

PSALM CXXX

Out of the deeps (as of the sea)
I cry to Thee, O God, who art forever;
God, my Master, heed my voice,
Let thine ears be exceeding eager
For my voice in its beseechings.

If transgressions Thou straitly reckon
O Thou, who art alone God,
Who, O Master, shall stand upright before Thee!
But with Thee, ay Thee, there is mercy,
That men truly may worship Thee!

I hang upon Him that is forever;
My life doth hang upon God;
On His name I stay my faith.
My life more yearneth for God my Master
Than they who watch for the daybreak.

[*Interrupting Chorus:* Watchmen (we) for the breaking day!]

Let Israel trust in Yahweh!
For He, that is forever, is kind.
And multitudes find in Him their freedom,
And He, even He buyeth Israel
From all their transgressions, free!

True, then, the conscientious translator and paraphrast in this case admit humiliation; but they must record at the same time the cause. Slavery is no longer a living institution. It does not delight us to consider the Eternal God as our indulgent Slave-Master, who has bought us from some cruel exploiter of soul and body. Indeed, we take for granted that He is merciful. It can appear to us no joyful discovery that keeping books against us is not God's chief divine prerogative and most commendable perfection! The poem, then, is too obsolete in its organic image for great emotional reactions, unless we first, by historical imagination, restore some quite fortunately unthinkable social relations; but even so it will fail to occasion a very vivid sense of relief. Losing the overlaid poetry of godly paraphrasts through by-gone days, we sustain in this instance so egregious a loss, therefore, because what can be restored, instead of what must be removed, is of no very thrilling present-day worth.

Quite otherwise do we fare when we undertake the restoration and careful translation, with but little aid from the paraphrast, of the forty-fifth Psalm, although even more violent liberties were taken with it, and for a long time, by such as suffered from hermeneutical hallucinations and piously super-induced exegetical dementia!

PSALM XLV

I

Deep-stirred is my spirit: | how goodly it is!
Song-speech is upon me, | wrought fair for a King.
My tongue the swift pen | of him *wisdom constraineth.*

More beauteous art thou, | than the sons be of man,
Graciousness also | hath been shed on thy lips;—
So the mighty God | hath blessed thee forever!

II

Gird thy sword on thy thigh, | most potent War-Lord,
Thy hallowed glory | yea, and thy majesty.

Tread down, press forward | ride forth to battle,
For steadfast truth | and meekness, even justice,
And awful marvels | thy right hand shall show thee!

Thy darts are made keen, | the peoples fall before thee,
Stricken in spirit | be the foes of the King.

Thy throne is, O Might of God, | from of old and for aye,
An upright sceptre | the rod of thy rule;
Loved hast thou justice | and abhorred ungodliness:

So, the mighty God, | thy God, did anoint thee
With a chrism of gladness | above all kings!

III

Myrrh-aloes and cassia | they be thy vesture,
From ivory king-halls | where thou takest delight;
Daughters of kings | be among thy jewels,
At thy right a King's bride | all Or of Ophir.

Harken O daughter | and bend low thine ear,
Remember not thy people | nor the house of thy father,
And the King shall long | (*fair as Eve!*) | for thy beauty,
He thy Lord is and God, | O bow thee before him,
And the daughter *of the mightiest* | shall come with a gift,
Of thy face shall sue favor | the wealth-lords of the people.

Altogether is she glorious | the King's daughter in *thy presence,*
Close-woven broideries | of gold her raiment,
In many-hued tissue | is she led to the King.

Virgin-trains of her comrades | shall be brought unto thee,
O be they led | exulting and gladsome,
O may they enter | the high hall of the King.

In the stead of thy fathers | shall stand up thy sons,
Whom thou shalt appoint thee | o'er all the earth chiefs!

Made-memorable be thy name thro' me | from age unto age
Where peoples shall praise thee | from of old and for aye!

First, let us note the elements of paraphrase. The "ready scribe" with which ends the third line can convey no poetic joy to us as a metaphor. We recall only too well "scribes, pharisees, hypocrites." To modernize it as "ready writer" only makes matters a little worse. We have here in our poem a lost institution, a forgotten calling; and "him wisdom constraineth," describing his dignity and supposed function, is the best we were able to do towards the literary salvage of the opening lines. The intruded "fair as Eve" in the seventh line of the third stanza is the restoration of an ancient pun which the rhythmic utterance, and surely the context, would keep present here in a Hebrew poet's mind, convinced reverently as he was of the significance at all times of personal names, and the gravity of the most trivial double ententes. To "desire" for the Hebrew was "to Eve"; and "Eve" was she whom God fashioned to utter in flesh the desire of man's eyes, and of his soul. So, to the king of the forty-fifth Psalm, the bride is the desire of his eyes and of his soul, created on purpose for his divine delectation. Apart from this particular pun, the paraphrast has had in this case a sinecure. What we offer is

altogether the work of the conscientious translator, assisted in difficult places by the textual emender. When we alter the picture of the king as Rameses the Great, slaughtering his foes, to the extent of making them be more humanely "stricken in spirit;" we do but recall ancient physiological psychology, which located the passions in the liver; pity and envy in the bowels; intellect and spiritual energy in the breast—particularly the heart—leaving the brain without ascertainable use to man. The same word is used here by the Psalmist as in the first line which we rendered "deep stirred is my spirit." But how revolutionary is not the change our translator has here wrought! We have now a true encomiastic epithalamial ode; and if it be taken messianically, it must be on the score only of the theme:—a king greeted, in the hope of his realizing the oriental ideal of kingship,—rather than on the score of any quotable theological phrases. If "anointed" with a "chrism" of gladness,—which saves him, at least verbally, from our modern disgust at the fate of Aaron's priestly beard;—he is not yet the Anointed, the "Christ," by many tokens royal alike and human. He has "sons" in the stead of fathers "for his honor;" and requires the poet's praise to immortalize his name. If he be in the place of God—"He thy Lord is and God,"—this is alone mystically, for love's sake, to the bride; and if he be the very "Might of God," it is as occupant of a theocratic seat, for the cause sake

which he espouses:—justice, compact of steadfast truth and meekness; and lastly, for his passionate and proud self-appropriation of the "mighty God" as indeed his very own. Still, as substantiating an oriental King-ideal, who would deny the hero of the forty-fifth Psalm an active and honorable part in fashioning the popular conception of the Messiah?

It is not the translator's fault if the historical critic uses the quite questionable reading "the daughter of Tyre" to identify the bride with the abominable Jezabel; and the praised King with the cruel Ahab; neither is he responsible for any possible agreement with the hopes entertained by the disaffected, in connection with the accession of Jehu, the prophet-anointed usurper. Such definite and doubtful localizations hinder the poem's breadth of application and depth of emotional appeal; and are, from the poetical critic's point of view, irrelevant, nay, noxious gossip; from which, following St. Jerome's reading in his third critical Psalm Version,[1] we venture to deliver the present reader!

But there are cases in which century-long adoptions of a particular interpretation have to be fought, if we are to restore the integrity of the poetic conception. Of such cases let Psalm twenty-three prove a painful instance. All through the poem we deal, according to our judgment, only with the sheep and the shepherd. The preceding

[1] From the Hebrew text, not from the Septuagint: Quincuplex Palterium 1508, text edited by Paul de Legarde. 1874.

and concluding chorus imply, in the natural view of the poem, the same figure as do the first two stanzas. The third must be more or less attracted to the remainder, despite "pasture's" possible meaning of "feast," or "stretch" as "recline" at a banquet. But granted the proposed audacity, and again we have no more what the commentators gave us: the conventional feeding unto repleteness and imbibing unto drunkenness at a board of divine plenty, with mysterious enemies inexplicably behind shields, or across the conveniently intervening tables. We have, instead, a most thrilling adventure:—on the high table-lands the panthers and wolves are kept off by the shepherd, and the pasture has been cleared of poisonous weeds; the silly sheep, straying to the edge of the wilderness, is rescued from the prowling wild beast in wait for estrays; and his wounds are tenderly salved; too faint, however, to be driven to the brook for refreshment, the divine shepherd has given him to drink, from his own very flask in his very own cup, exhilarating now more than wine!

PARAPHRASE OF PSALM XXIII

Who unto his own ever cometh[2] | he, my shepherd, nourisheth me
Wherefore (his very own sheep) | I shall fail of no goodly thing.

In the green homes of sprouting young grass | he biddeth me stretch in noon-plenty,
To wells of rest and refreshment | he leadeth me by gentle degrees.
He quickeneth in me once again | the delight and desire of life,

[2]The divine name's eternity is viewed here dynamically, and in motion toward both himself and those he loves.

He goeth before to guide me | in straight paths—true to his name!

Yea, although to the hill-pass[3] I wend | though gorges by day of death-gloom,
I will harbor no fear at all | lest anywise harm may befall me;
For thou, that art even thyself, | art verily nigh unto me,
Thy staff-of-sway and thy crook | when I pant, upstay me with cheer.

Thou spreadest abroad before me | my pasture (as were I thy guest)
Meetly in th' immediate sight | of such as would harry and slay me;
Thou hast soothed with healing ointment | my *cruelly-bruised* head,
And my cup (thine own, in my faintness) | overfloweth with gladness of heart.

Goodness and mercy (his sheep-dogs twain) | my life-long surely shall drive me,
And I will return all my days to *his* fold, | who cometh to his own forever!

Vividly conscious we are of the bracketed temerity in the last chorus: "goodness and mercy" visualized as sheep-dogs, driving the sheep to the fold again and again! But so the text is explained that says the sheep returns forever and not "abides forever" in the Lord's house, shed, stable or fold; and the vocable for "drive" (translated in the most authoritative dictionary "to dog") gets its full hitherto uncomprehended force. But, granted the temerity, who would not rather see in "goodness and mercy" the shepherd's sheep-dogs than flunkies (as some prominent scholars would have them be) mysteriously driving the guests frantic with their officious attentions! If, however, the scandalized reader prefers (unallured by the antivivisection text so obtained) he may

[3] A. V: Valley of the Shadow of Death.

drop at will the paraphrastic suggestion and our parenthesis, and rejoice in the figure of the third stanza as merely implied with quiet innocuous delicacy.

There are, on the other hand, psalms in which the translator needs but verbal help from the paraphrast, like the eighth, which we here offer for inspection. True, the second and third stanzas get a fresh significance in the contrast of vital and inorganic manifestations of God's power; true, the line about the Leviathan, hitherto mere tautology, is a delightful surprise; and the renderings of man in his glory and in his humility (that is, of the two Hebrew terms for man, paraphrased and contrasted) constitute mentionable restorations; true, also, the "lacking little to the stature of might that is God" has a Swinburnian rhythmic splendor, such as that poet so liberally drew himself from the Bible, and which we compel him to restore, for the nonce; true, the "making sweet sabbath of rest" to the hero of the vendetta helps much in comprehending the influence of the divine revelation through the babes at the mother's breast. But it is in no rendering of a noteworthy re-discovery, or textual emendation, or elucidation, that our service in this case consists. After all, if the quoted paraphrase is uplifting and imaginatively seizing, this is due to the strict dominance of every phrase, hemistich, line, stanza, by the same one thought, as was not the case in either the Authorized or in the Prayer Book Version.

PARAPHRASE OF PSALM VIII

Choric Refrain:

O Thou who alone art forever, | O Lord of us, thine own;
How high exalted Thy name and the truth thereof | through the compass of the world:

Thou, who hast upreared Thy war-splendor divine | far over the heavens
Forth of the mouths of babes, ay, sucklings, | hast founded Thy strength of life,

So answering such as be fain | with hate to bind down and beset Thee,
So making sweet Sabbath of rest | to the foe and his kinsman's avenger;—

When I cast up my eyes to Thy heaven | wrought of old with thy fashioning fingers;
The moon and the stars whose pathways | Thou, changeless, hast established unchanging,

Lo! what is man, the loftiest who with his breath ceaseth, | that thou in thy thoughts shouldest cherish him?
What is man, the lowliest child of the soil, | woman-born, very man, that Thou should'st draw nigh him with solace?

Thou hast made him such that he lacketh but little | to the stature of might that is God's,

And with weight of worth, and adornment of grace, | Thou hast shielded, crowned, and enwreathed him.

Thou hast caused him to rule | over all Thou hast wrought with thy fashioning master-hand,
The whole hast thou bounded and fixed in its station | as footstool under his feet:—

Sheep, ay, and kine, | all the flocks and the herds thereof,
And likewise the wild beasts also | that prowl in the gaping waste,
The birds that fly through the heaven, | and the fish that swim through the sea,
And the nameless vast swift-treading the highways | he cleaveth him through the great seas.

Choric Refrain:

O Thou who alone art forever | O Lord of us, thine own,
How high exalted Thy name and the truth thereof; | throughout the whole world!

But in some instances, moreover, by the simple procedure above exemplified, an enormous result is effected poetically. "Voice of Adonai" is the regular Hebrew phrase for thunder. "Voice of Yahweh" then carries the meaning of thunder, along with the awfulness of the greater divine name. Merely insert, line after line, "the thunder-voice of Yahweh" and hear the result! Besides, there are two lines rejected from the text by some editors as spurious (like the supposedly redundant "I say the morning watch" in the before quoted Psalm CXXX). View these rather as interrupting semi-choruses, not perhaps integral parts of the original composition, but intended and introduced by the ritual editor for aesthetic relief and contrast: the God of Glory thundering, yet eternally serene, above the tempest; the thunder-voice stripping the forests, yet the still small voice of His praise in the secret spirit of man, and in the inherent silences of the universe, and now, from provoking glosses, our two intrusive lines are transfigured into lyrico-dramatic beauties of no mean order.

PSALM XXIX

Grand Chorus:

Praise Yahweh, who is forever, | O ye sons of the Powers divine,
Praise Yahweh, who is, indeed, | for weight of worth, strength of heart,
Praise Yahweh, whose yea is yea, | in worship His Name begetteth,
Bow low to Yahweh, alone very God, | in holy apparel of beauty!

The thunder-voice of Yahweh is | upon the waters above the firmament,

(Interrupting semi-chorus):

[God, the God of glory | uttereth the thunder]
Yea, Yahweh Himself upholdeth Him | above the encompassing great waters.
The thunder-voice of Yahweh | uttereth His creative might,
The thunder-voice of Yahweh | giveth forth His awful beauty,

The thunder-voice of Yahweh | shattereth the cedar trees,
Yahweh, and He alone, | doth shiver the cedars of Lebanon,

Lebanon He maketh in sheet-lightning | to leap like a young unicorn,
Yea, Sirion also | like a lusty, fleet bull of the wilds,

The thunder-voice of Yahweh | heweth the scarpéd rocks,
Yahweh, He alone heweth | the rocks with forkéd flames,

The thunder-voice of Yahweh | doth make the barren waste to dance,
Yahweh alone doth whirl about | the barren waste of Kadesh!

The thunder-voice of Yahweh | causeth the térebinth-trees to writhe,
Yahweh, and He alone, | rippeth and strippeth the forests bare,[10]

(Interrupting semi-chorus):

[Yet in the mansion of His Majesty | all things say softly: Glory!]

Grand Chorus:

Yahweh at the flood of yore | did set aloft His throne,
Yahweh thereon is enthroned | as King in judgment forever,

Yahweh, His strength divine | upon His own bestoweth,
Yahweh bestoweth His blessing | upon His people, ay, Peace!

In the forty-fifth Psalm the translator exhibited to the attentive scrutinizer of his typography a somewhat interesting aesthetic phenomenon, in the waxing stanza not unanalogous to the gradual swelling or cumulative tripartite "Song of Miriam." The artful stanzas consist, namely, of substanzas respectively: the first,—of three lines, two

[10] A. V.: The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to bring forth young, and discovereth the thick bushes.

lines, and a chorus of one line; the second,—of two lines, three lines, two, three (a noteworthy doubling the first stanza), and a chorus of two lines (similarly doubling the first chorus); the third,—of four lines, of six lines (doubling the first stanza in a different fashion), and then one of three, another of three, one of two and a chorus again as before of two lines. So strong is this impression of orderly unfoldment and strengthening by mathematical progression, that one becomes averse on this ground alone, if none other, to the ingenious detection and removal of glosses. Let the anxious observe what Dr. Briggs has left of the forty-fifth Psalm, and then ask if the present translator is an iconoclast! Perhaps he may be a redresser rather of icons on idolatrous pedestals; but that is not so bad, if the holy icons redressed are actually in the text of the original, which text is, whatever its faults, the best we are ever likely to possess on earth.

Carefully noting, then, this system of stanzas within stanza, we may sometimes be able to restore a lost line to its place, and produce a startling and legitimate beauty. Psalms forty-two and forty-three are by universal consent one poem. There is, also, obviously even for the reader of the authorized version, a refrain after each stanza. Strange to say, in the second and third instance, although separated by an unfortunate editorial divorce, the refrain of the stanzas is identical; while in the first instance the Hebrew text shows

a small, but all-important variation. Perhaps the second stanza opening with "O my God" caused some scribe to omit *God* from the last place in the just preceding refrain. But if so, why was it not later on restored? The omission is so singular as to suggest its being intentional. Besides, when we note the text as it stands, a most audacious Joblike meaning begins to permeate the first stanza by retrospect from the refrain, which spreads irresistibly to the following stanzas. The Psalmist is faithful but unhappy, with a sense of fatal separation from his God. In the North in the snowy Hermon summits, to the East in the fertile Jordan valley, ay, and in the heart of the South, on the little hill of Zion,[11] God seems far off, and some one taunts him (within his soul, or without) nay, many men taunt him: "Where is now thy God?" View the troublesome lines in the second stanza as an interrupting chorus (say, of children); observe the system of sub-stanzas within the stanzas; supply the missing taunt, which is cardinal to the composition, and so complete the rhythmic construction of the third stanza, and observe the amazing force given by contrast to the line following; and read then the translation in which there are hardly any liberties of the paraphrast beyond the renderings of latent meanings to the divine name, and let the honest literary reader report whether or not there be gain in a purely literary translation of a literary master-

[11] Usually considered an unintelligible line!

piece, for the religious, ay, or even for the theological reader.

PSALMS XLII-XLIII

I

As a hind that panteth and yearneth | after the swift-running waters
Even so panteth my soul and yearneth | after the God of great might!
My soul is athirst for th' omnipotent God | for God the deep well-spring of life;
How long ere I go up and behold | the countenance of God?

My own secret tears are become | my stay, yea my bread day and night,
The while all day long one taunteth me: | "Where, pray, is thy God of great might?"

These things am I fain to remember | and shed forth my soul upon me:
How I led the multitude solemnly | to the abode of the mighty God,
With jubilant shout and thanksgiving | in the blithsome throng at the feast.

Chorus:
Wherefore art thou thus bowed low, O my soul, | and makest thy moan over me?
Abide thou God's time, Who forever is, | seeing surely I shall yet give him praise
For the marvelous manifold salvation | of his countenance, even God's!

II

O my God, my soul is bowéd low | that I needs must remember thee
From the land of Jordan and the Hermon-peaks | yea, even from thy lowly hill:
Abyss above shouteth to abyss below | at the cry of thy poured-forth cataracts;
All thy breaking billows and rolling waves | upon *me* do they pass over!

(Interrupting voices, probably of children):

[Day by day, He that is Yahweh | giveth charge to his loving-kindness,

And in the night-season the spirit of song, | even His, is with me.]

A prayer, lo, my prayer | to the mighty God, the fount of my life:
I will say to my strong God, my Rock, | why hast thou stricken me from remembrance?

Why in sackcloth and ashes go I | in the midst of the encompassing foe?
And with sneers that shatter my bones | my opponents scornfully gibe me;
While all the day long men taunt me: | "Where, pray, is thy God of great might?"

Chorus:
Wherefore art thou thus bowéd low, O my soul | and makest thy moan over me?
Abide thou God's time, Who forever is, | seeing surely I shall yet give him praise
For the marvelous manifold salvation | of thy countenance, and my God!

III

My judge be thou, and plead my plea | against a cruel and impious people,
From a man without scruple and iniquitous | O do thou help me escape;
For thou, thou art the God of my might. | Why cast me off as abominable?
Why in sackcloth and ashes roam I hither and thither | in the midst of the encompassing foe?

(While all the day long men taunt me: | "Where, pray, is thy God of great might?")
O stretch forth thy light and thy troth | that they may guide me and ward me!

To thy holy hill let them bring me, | to the abiding place of thy greatness,
That I may go in to the altar of God, | yea, God the joy of my joy,
And I with the harp will bless thee, | O omnipotent God, my God.

Chorus:
Wherefore art thou thus bowéd low, O my soul, | and makest thy moan over me?
Abide thou God's time, who forever is, | seeing surely I shall yet give Him praise

For the marvelous manifold salvation | of my countenance, and my God!

Of course, our versions would have to be outfitted with an elaborate system of footnotes, followed by an excursus for each stanza, and a score of appendices duly bespattered all over with Hebrew and Greek letters for their justification to the erudite. In our defence we will only adduce a line of Emanuel Geibel, who at the conclusion of his "*Distichen aus Griechenland*" enumerates all that a poet should be, and finishes with the line:

"*Aber der Thor nur verlangt dass ein Gelehrter er sei.*
(But only a fool requires that a learned pedant he be.)

At many points, quite as many as any translator, he had to resolve ambiguities, select between possible alternatives, restore for probable corruptions of text; doubtless, although he had in the present examples of his industry the help of a scholarly colleague,[12] he was no doubt quite often in error; but chiefly from all sorts of other points of view than his own! Be all this as it may. It is boldly claimed here that a student of literature will, equipped with such paraphrases as the above, go to other translations more literal, greatly helped by having experienced the shock of a particular interpretation of his originals, in swift rhythmic movement, and with sufficient embodied commentary to make an immediate emotional understanding of the poetic compositions as wholes possible, nay, likely. To be sure, the

[12] Professor Wm. Haskell DuBose, M.A.

paraphrases are prolix beside the terse originals. That is a quite evident loss, which has to be sustained: the sense of fiercely compressed energy. But this loss, let it be boldly affirmed, is not always to be taken seriously as a defect. Only by occasional paraphrase can a translator proceed at all, however closely he strives to adhere to his text.

III. A Practical Theory.

A little above we quoted for criticism as typical of a certain school the impossible theory of translation brought forward by Dr. Trench half a century ago, in connection with his still serviceable essay, introductory to the study of Calderon. It was not, however, without amusement that we read in Mr. Edward Fitzgerald's complete works a passage quoted from a letter to Dr. Trench: "I remember that you regretted having tried the asonante, and you now decide that prose is best for English translation."[1] Action and reaction! From the strictest sect to the loosest! Yet such is human nature, and we need not marvel at his antipodal change of heart. The reader has but to compare Shelley and Fitzgerald with Trench and MacCarthy in the *"Magico Prodigioso;"* Fitzgerald alone with MacCarthy and Trench in the *"Vida es Sueno,"* to decide whether it is better we should deal with a poet as a poet, and be an English Pegasus unto his Spanish poetship; or prefer the role of the pack ass, transporting

[1] Dated 1880; the translations, 1856.

his exotic provisions and camp outfit, nay, and his corpse to boot, while leaving his spirit to soar in spaces Empyrean beyond our English ken! So hopelessly bad as we may seem to imply, the case verily is not. But a little hyperbole sometimes, picturesquely jocose, clears the atmosphere, as the damnatory psalms and the British commination service did for our near and dear forefathers of blessed memory. "I am persuaded," says Fitzgerald, "that to keep life in the Work (as drama must), the translator, however inferior to his original, must recast that original into his own likeness, more or less."[2]

Surely, he is right, and let us remark incidentally: it is not only Drama that needs to have life kept in it! Fitzgerald's *"Omar"* has won both its author and translator great fame; and the famous translation of "Omar" was done on the same principle as the adaptations of Calderon, only far more idiosyncratically applied. Since, we have had many closer renderings of the Persian astronomer-poet's stanzas, but I fancy we shall, to the last man and woman of us, still hold on to the skirts of Fitzgerald, for all the insinuations of the "Variorum," or the praiseworthy improvements of Mr. George Roe.[3] It may be "impudence" to "meddle in so free and easy a way with a great man's masterpieces,"[4] but Fitzgerald did not fail, as he feared; for he actually "con-

[2] A letter to James Russell Lowell, 1878.
[3] *Rubaiyát* of Omar Khâyyâm, etc. A. C. McClurg, 1906.
[4] Letter to R. C. Trench 1865.

ciliated English or modern sympathy," and performed the miracle of making Calderon and Omar into English and modern poets, for whom we shall thenceforth care to suffer, with stoic delight, the labors even of literal translators: word for worders, verse for versers, rhyme for rhymers, pun for punners, unto the verbal contortionists and prestidigitators in the nethermost pit of unidiomatic infamy!

Quite apart from the doctrine and practice of this King of Paraphrasts, and his follower afar off (Mr. Richard Le Gallienne, Hâfiz in tow), even the greatest of translators, is, as we have now stated several times, by moments at least, however, unavowedly of his school. Let the student copy out side by side Shelley's, Anster's, Haven's,[5] Swanwick's, Martin's, Taylor's, Latham's and Bowring's renderings of the "Songs of the Archangels," with which opens the Prologue in Heaven to Goethe's "*Faust.*"[6] Which of them is Goethe's poem? Or for greater brevity, let the reader take the untranslatable last eight lines of the Second Part of "*Faust*" and compare the results of translations, and decide whether he will insist on an identical rhyme-system in lines so brief as to exclude wholly the element of paraphrase.

[5] Select Minor Poems, translated from the German of Goethe and Schiller, with notes. John S. Dwight, Boston. 39.

[6] In mentioning archangels, "Mr." and "Miss" become otiose glories, that scream for discreet omission—and so the euphonic protest against Arnoldian urbanity has been heeded here.

TRANSLATION OF A POEM FROM GOETHE

(1) *Alles Vergängliche*
Ist nur ein Gleichniss;
Das Unzulängliche
Hier wird's Ereigniss;
Das unbeschreibliche
Hier ist est gethan
Dast Ewig Weibliche
Zieht uns hinan.

(2) All we see before us passing
Sign and symbol is alone;
Here, what thought can never reach to
Is by semblances made known;
What man's words may never alter,
Done in act—in symbol shown.
Love, whose perfect type is woman
The divine and human blending,
Love, forever and forever,
Draws us onward, still ascending.
(Anster, '35)

(3) All of mere transient date
As symbol showeth;
Here the inadequate
To fulness groweth;
Here the ineffable
Wrought is in love;
The ever-womanly
Draws us above. (Swanwick, '49)

(4) Each thing of mortal birth
Is but a type;
What was of feeble worth
Here becomes ripe!
What was a mystery
Here meets the eye;
The everwomanly
Draws us on high. (Bowring, '53)

(5) All in earth's fleeting state
As symbol is still meant;
Here the inadequate
Grows to fulfillment,
Here is wrought the inscrutable,
To silence that awes us;
Love, eternal, immutable,
On, ever on, draws us. (Martin, '65)

(6) All things transitory
But as symbols are sent;
Earth's insufficiency
Here grows to event:
The Indescribable
Here it is done;
The woman-soul leadeth us
Upward and on! (Taylor, '70)

(7) Mortal that perishes
Types the ideal,
All that fault cherishes
Thus becomes real.
Wrought superhumanly
Here it is gone—
The ever-womanly
Draweth us on. (F. H. Hedge[1])

(8) All things corruptible
Are but reflection;
Earth's insufficiency
Here finds perfection;
Here the ineffable
Wrought is with love;
The Eternal-Womanly
Draws us above. (Latham, '02)

(9) All things that perish here
Shadow the ideal;
Vain longings we cherish here,
Lo, they wax real;
Behold superhumanly
Th' ineffable done!
The evermore womanly
Draweth upward and on. (W. N. G.)

Let, however, one specimen here adduced make clear beyond a doubt and cavil how hard be the ways of the translator in this respect.

The theme is that of George Meredith's "Woodland Peace," but the whole comprised in eight lines of such spontaneity and simplicity as to baffle analysis. Let Longfellow's translation be

[1] In Crowell's edition of Swanwick's *Faust*.

offered the reader first in deference to the engaging importer of poetic cosmopolitanism:

> O'er all the hill tops
> Is quiet now,
> In all the tree-tops
> Hearest thou
> Hardly a breath;
> The birds are asleep in the trees;
> Wait; soon like these
> Thou, too, shalt rest.

Spürest du—Kaum einen Hauch is rendered with word-for-word fidelity—except that "hearest" applies only to the ear, whereas *spürest* includes every other sense. Furthermore there is the very different emotional value of the second person singular of verb and pronoun in the two languages; affectionately familiar in German, stiltedly formal and obsolete in English. "In the trees" for *im Walde* repeats the word of the third line, adding no value of its own. "Like these" makes explicit a comparison purposely left more delicately implicit by Goethe; and rhyming as it does with "trees," "these" might be mistakenly referred to them.

But the worst defect appears in the use of "hill-tops" as equivalent for *Gipfel;* which, meaning "summit," could have a symbolic as well as a literal sense, whereas "hilltop," alas, is strictly topographic!

Now let us see what Aytoun and Martin have done. Two heads being so obviously better than one, our expectation is raised for all the fame of

the singer of "Miles Standish" and the "Vacant Chair."

Peace breathes along the shade
  Of every hill,
The tree-tops of the glade
  Are hushed and still;
All woodland murmurs cease,
  The birds to roost within the brake are gone.
Be patient, weary heart, anon
  Thou, too, shalt be at peace.

The same objection as before can be urged against "hill." "All woodland murmurs cease" merely repeats line four without substantial gain by the prolixity, save a rhyme. "The birds to roost" is for us Americans quite out of tune. Let us hope this line is Aytoun's and not Martin's, lest Oehlenschläger's and Heine's often so felicitous translator suffer hurt in reputation!

Next let us see what Sir Edgar Alfred Bowring has done for us. He who Englished so much of Schiller and Goethe surely will do better than others with this elusive poem!

Hushed on the hill
  Is the breeze;
Scarce by the zephyr
  The trees
  Softly are pressed;
The woodbird's asleep on the bough.
Wait, then, and thou
  Soon will find rest.

"On the bough" not being an equivalent for *Wald,* forest, the *Vöglein* have become the woodbird. This may pass. "Zephyr" idly repeats "breeze;" and "pressed," for all it be negatived, leaves behind it a most vexing suggestion that comes nigh to annulling the whole intent of the

poem—that of making us realize "peace." But more than all, how has the large relevancy of *Ueber allen Gipfeln Ist Ruh* been specifically contracted in the would-be equivalent "Hushed on the hill Is the breeze!"

The very title *Ein Gleiches* baffled our translators. Aytoun and Martin called the piece "Evening," as did also Sir Edgar Alfred Bowring. Longfellow headed it "The Same," properly referring to the title of the previous piece of kindred feeling. Without the preceding piece "the same" becomes preposterous. And what pray does that mean? What is the Same? Here Rossetti helped their audacious follower to a title that should render *Ein Gleiches,* and make it equivalent to *"Ein Gleiches"* in reference to the matter of the poem itself. Of course every one should know that its actual reference is to the title of the poem that precedes it in the original edition of Goethe's Poems, namely: *Wanderer's Nachtlied*—Wayfarer's Evensong. His caption therefore should be: "Evenso."

EVENSO

Hovereth o'er every height
  Peace visible;
And every treetop—light
  Breathings do lull
Of dreamless sleep;
  Birds hush them in the brake.
  'Bide thee, thou too ere long shalt take
Thy rest—still, deep.

Confessedly there is considerable liberty taken with the original in the last version. But noth-

ing is wantonly added, not even "dreamless sleep," which helps to repeat the sentiment of "peace." And the ambiguous feeling (rather than sense) of the first line is at all events preserved in:—"Hovereth o'er every height, Peace visible," mayhap as cloud, as blue sky, as euthanasia an theophany, as the symbolic dove by Jordan's bank. Peace "in bodily shape" somehow "hovereth" and is above and nigh and felt as Peace; and the height—is the mere mountain or the morally sublime! For *Spürest du Kaum einen Hauch*—"Breathings do lull Of dreamless sleep" —is a free amplification to avoid at a critical place the difficult second person singular, and secure a surer and more definite psychological allusion for the "waver of tree tops."

Has the present writer then preserved the sentiment of the original; though he has sacrificed the simple direct familiarity of style? Does the cadence: "Thy rest—still, deep" atone for the obsolete: "Bide thee, thou too"?

The little lyric *"Ueber allen Gipfeln"* is here adduced, and its best known translation cruelly criticized, all on the score of the exiguous metric limits and the difficult rhyme system of the original, which preclude paraphrase and natural idiomatic translation. We venture to offer for the reader's proper humiliation—if he cherish the heresy of absolute metric fidelity, etc., eleven more gay experiments of our domestic Muse, tossing in air

the Bohemian glass of an impossible little lyric by the great Goethe at his best.

(1) *Ueber allen Gipfeln*
Ist Ruh,
In allen Wipfeln
Spürest du
Kaum einen Hauch;
Die Vöglein schweigen im Walde
Warte nur—balde
Ruhest du auch.

(2) Above every height, lo,
Is calm;
In treetops light, low
Breatheth the balm
Of dreamless sleep;
Woodbirds are dumb: be still too;
Soon thou shalt have thy fill too
Of peace, calm, deep.

(3) Above every summit,
Peace broods;
What hush hath o'ercome it—
The gloam of the woods,—
Scarce a breath aloft;
The wee birds be silent also;
Soon peace shall befall so
Thee, too, dream-soft.

(4) O'er all summits, what quiet
For aye!
No breath doth sigh at
The topmost spray,—
No murmur to hear;
Hushed are the woodland thrushes:
How deep the spirit's hush is,—
Thy rest draweth near.

(5) Peace hovers forever
O'er the height;
In treetops no waver
To-night,
No breath; Ah, me!
The birds in the woods be silent;
Abide but a little while, and
Peace visiteth thee.

(6) Over all high places—
Repose!
In leafy laces
Comes and goes
To the topmost spray,
No breath even; the woodbirds are dumb now,
Wait, soon to thee will come now
Repose for aye.

(7) Above all high places
Calm bides;
In leafy green spaces
Aloft, there glides
Scarce a breath of air;
The woodbirds are still: Refrain thee;
Like calm shall gain thee
Soon aware.

(8) O'er all heights that are highest
All's still;
In treetops no shyest
Waking thrill,
No breath as in dream;
Birds in the brake are dumb too:—
Ah, wait,—thou soon wilt come to
Thy rest supreme.

(9) O'er the heights, forever
Is rest;
Not a breath, not a quiver
The tranquillest,
In the treetops high;
No note of woodthrush or plover;—
Be quiet,—the day is over—
Thy rest draws nigh.

(10) On every sheer height is
Deep peace;
The breath so light is
Nigh to cease,—
In the tree tops, see!
Woodwarblers of song are bereaven;
Soon peace cometh even
To thee and me.

(11) O'er the summits thou soarest,
Still Peace;
To the tops of the forest
Wavers cease,

Scarce a breath! The song
Of the woodbirds is fled. Ah, whither?
Like peace stealeth hither
For thee, ere long.

(12) O'er the heights hov'reth
Deep rest;
Not a quiver discov'reth
Wind-caressed,
In the treetops a breath;
The woodbirds hush them; Ah, bide thee,
Rest steals beside thee,
And beckoneth!

But if it be still contended that a translated poem shall preserve the exact form of the original, number of lines, metrical system, rime-enlacing, kind of rime etc., etc., how shall this be in a piece like the one in question? Feminine rimes are scarce in English, and likely to be forced and grotesque. Admittedly no such word as 'Gipfel' exists in the English, 'Ruh' is not exactly convertible with either rest, calm or peace. For 'gipfel,' 'summit,' 'high places,' 'sheer height,' the 'heights' are only equivalents. Of these again 'summit' has no available rimes; and even 'places' is very difficult, requiring a verbal roundabout, unless 'green spaces' can be pressed into service to describe the massed leafage of the trees, what French so collectively and with poetic delicacy describes as to *"la ramée."* So our twelve efforts at rendering this difficult little poem are printed here, to make evident that rigid adherence to the form of the original is theoretically possible, provided always somewhere paraphrase be permitted; and what is far more serious, the employment of forced rimes, and occasionally

doubtful uses of words (as 'glides' in the seventh, or 'wavers' in the eleventh version), and broken constructions (as in the third, fourth, tenth and twelfth) be allowed to pass muster, where the original is a fluid indivisible whole.

Now the most serious defect apparent alike in all these twelve translations may as well be frankly confessed, anticipating our readers' head shake. Where the original is simple, inevitable, with all the air of an improvisation, the twelve versions are more or less stilted, difficult, self-conscious and devoid of singing lilt. But how can ease and naïveté of expression be obtained, and a foreign rime system be adhered to unaltered; while we are constrained to move, besides, within such narrow metrical limits as to allow of practically no inversion and no paraphrase, that is, with grace and charm?

Clearly, the theory of rigid adhesion to the form of the original must allow for exceptions numerous and glaring in proportion to the lack of kinship between the languages in question and the singular felicity and inimitable fragility of lyric rime, rhythm, verbal euphony and spell-power.

IV. A Great Translator.

But it may very well be argued that the writer's skill and gift is not such as to establish any argument, whatever his laudable assiduity may be. Let us, then, turn from his admittedly doubtful experiments above quoted to the work beyond

cavil of perhaps the supreme English translator: Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

It was, indeed, a great gift to our literature, that wondrous volume of "Dante and His Circle," enabling us all to estimate the value of the poetry our most inspired forefathers loved, and endeavored to emulate, from Chaucer to Sidney and Spenser. Considerable as may have been at times the influence of old France, that of Italian poetry was unintermittent and greatly for good. Not blindly adoring would we seem, but deeply thankful. We are, indeed, enabled at times to criticize Rossetti's work, enjoying the advantage of comparison with other translations. Compare, for instance, Dante's "Sonnet to Guido Covaclanti" in Shelley's version with Rossetti's. The last lines of the octave trouble both translators.

Anzi vivendo sempre in un talento
Di star insieme crescesse il desio.
But we, observing old companionship,
To be companions still should long thereby.

Surely Shelley wins the honors with

That even satiety should still enhance
Between our hearts their strict community.

But most striking is Rossetti's rendering of the second line in the sestet:

And her the thirtieth on my roll,

marring, for English readers with unintelligible fidelity, the poem as such. Shelley paraphrases this obscure reference to a list of bygone beauties, "and my gentle love" erring, only in the person

of the possessive pronoun "my" for "thy." On the other hand,

E quivi ragionar sempre d'amore,

is certainly better rendered:

And not to talk of anything but love,

by Rossetti; than by Shelley in his pointless phrase "with passionate talk." Yet again, the last line:

Siccome io credo che sariamo noi,

is more lyrically fluid in Shelley's:

As I believe that thou and I should be,

than in Rossetti's—

As we should be, I think, if this were thus.

How one wishes that Rossetti had followed up this generous gift of "Dante and His Circle" with a Divine Comedy, that should forever naturalize the mature genius of the great Dante in England's and America's Helicon! That this is no mere pious wish founded on devout ignorance of rival claims, let a comparison attest in the crucial passage (lines 112 to 142) of Canto V in the "*Inferno.*" It is the well-known narrative concerning Paolo and Francesco's love and death and doom. And here, to save space, let us fix our attention exclusively on the four most remarkable and famous morsels from the great passage:

O lasso!

(1) *Quanti dolci pensier, quanto desio*
Meno costoro al doloroso passo!

Alas, how many sweet thoughts, how great desire, led these unto the woeful pass. (Norton's prose.)

Ah, me! what sweet thoughts, what longing led them to the woeful pass! (Gollancz, prose by terzets.)

Alas! by what sweet thoughts, what fond desire
Must they at length to that ill pass have reached!
(Carey, blank verse.)

Alas!
How many pleasant thoughts, how much desire
Conducted them unto the dolorous pass!
(Longfellow, blank verse.)

Alas! unto such ill
How many sweet thoughts, what strong ecstasies
Led these their evil fortune to fulfil!
(Byron, "terza rima.")

Alas!
All their sweet thoughts then, all the steps that led
To love, but brought them to this dolorous pass.
(Leigh Hunt, terza rima)

Ah, Woe!
What sweet fond thoughts, what passionate desire
Led to the pass whence such great sorrows flow!
(Plumptre, terza rima)

Alas!
How many sweet thoughts and how much desire
Led those two onward to the dolorous pass!
(Rossetti)

(2) Ma dimmi, al tempo de' dolci sospiri
A che e come concedette amore
Che conosceste i *dubbiosi desiri.*
But tell me at the time of the sweet sighs by what and how did love concede to you to *know the dubious desires?*
(Norton)

But tell me: in the time of the sweet sighs by what and how love granted you to *know the dubious desires?* (Gollancz)

But tell me in the time of your sweet sighs,
By what, and how love granted that *ye knew*
Your yet uncertain wishes? (Carey)

But tell me at the time of those sweet sighs
By what and in what manner love conceded,
That *you should know your dubious desires.* (Longfellow)

But tell me, in the season of sweet sighs,
By what and how thy love to passion rose,
So as his dim desires to recognize? (Byron)

But tell me, at the time when sighs were sweet,
What made thee strive no longer;—hurried thee
To the last step where bliss and sorrow meet? (Hunt)

But tell me in the time of those sweet sighs,
The hour, the mode in which love led you on
Doubtful desires to know with open eyes. (Plumptre)

But tell me the season of sweet sighs,
When and what way did love instruct you so
That *he in your vague longings made you wise?* (Rossetti)

(3) Nessunmaggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria; e ció sa il tuo dottore.

There is no greater woe than in misery to remember the happy time, and that thy teacher knows. (Norton)

There is no greater pain than to recall a happy time in wretchedness: and this thy teacher knows. (Gollancz)

No greater grief than to remember days
Of joy, when misery is at hand. That kens
Thy learn'd instructor. (Carey)

There is no greater sorrow
Than to be mindful of the happy time
In misery, and that thy teacher knows. (Longfellow)

The greatest of all woes
Is to remind us of our happy days
In misery, and that thy teacher knows. (Byron)

There is no greater sorrow (answered she)
And this thy teacher here knoweth full well,
Than calling to mind joy in misery. (Hunt)

A greater grief is none
Than to remember happier seasons past
In anguish; this thy teacher well hath known. (Plumptre)

There is no greater woe
Than the remembrance brings of happy days
In misery; and this thy guide doth know. (Rossetti)

(4) Quando legemmo il *disiato* riso
Esser baciato *da cotanto* amante,
Questi, che mai de me non *fia diviso*,
La bocca mi baciò tutto tremante.

When we read of the *longed-for* smile being kissed by *such* a lover, this one, never from me *shall be divided*, kissed my mouth all trembling. (Norton)

When we read how the *fond* smile was kissed by *such* a lover, he who *shall* never be *divided* from me, kissed my mouth all trembling. (Gollancz)

When of that smile we read,
The *wishéd* smile so rapturously kissed
By one *so deep* in love, then he, who ne'er
From me *shall separate*, at once my lips
All trembling kissed. (Carey)

When as we read of the much longed-for smile
Being by *such a noble* lover kissed
This one, who ne'er from me *shall be divided*,
Kissed me upon the mouth all palpitating. (Longfellow)

When we read the *long-sigh'd-for* smile of her,
To be thus kiss'd by *such devoted* lover,
He who from me *can be divided* ne'er
Kiss'd my mouth, trembling in the act all over.
(Byron)

'Twas where the lover, *mothlike in his flame*
Drawn by her *sweet* smile, kissed it. O then he
Whose lot and mine *are now for aye the same*
All in a tremble on the mouth kissed me. (Hunt)

When as we read how smile *long sought for* flushed
Fair face at kiss of lover *so renowned*,
He kissed me on my lips, as impulse rushed,
All trembling; now with *me for aye is bound*. (Plumptre)

For when we read of that *great* lover, how
He kissed the smile which he had *longed to win*,
Then he whom *naught can sever* from me now
Forever, kissed my mouth all quivering. (Rossetti)

How does not the closeness of the prose suggest at times the strait-jacket? How does not Hunt, the irresponsible, paraphrase altogether at times

too recklessly? How does not the stalwart Plumtre fail utterly in the fourth? And how always adequate and frequently brilliant is not Rossetti?

But it may be contended that Rossetti was so peculiarly consecrated to the service of Dante as to make such a comparison unfair. Let us turn, then, to his version from Villon, and note the coincidence here, also, and in greater degree of translator and paraphrast; the latter, always only appearing for desperate rescue of the former, or for the divine miracle that transfigures, through revisualization of the first poet's inspiring vision, the mere translation into a new original poem by the original poet in the translator's language. So we glance first at "The Ballade of Dead Ladies" where we have three other good translations conveniently to hand for comparison: Miss Castello's, Mr. John Payne's and Mr. Andrew Lang's.[8] First let us consider the refrain, that most critical of all lines in a ballade:

Mais où sont les neiges d'antan!
Where is fled the South wind's snow? (Castello)
But what is become of last year's snow? (Payne)
But where is the last year's snow? (Lang)
But where are the snows of yesteryear? (Rossetti)

What a felicity is not this last! Next, let us view the opening lines, only less critical for the beauty of the ballade:

Dictes-moi où, n'en quel pays
Est Flora, la belle Romaine.

[8] L. S. Castello's specimens of the Early Poetry of France, London, 1885, freely quoted in Longfellow's "Poets and Poetry of Europe."
"Ballades and Verses Vain." Andrew Lang, Scribner 1884.
"The Poems of Master François Villon," John Payne, Thomas Mosher, 1900.

Tell me to what region flown
Is Flora, the fair Roman gone. (Castello)

Tell me where, in what land of shade,
Bides fair Flora of Rome, and where. (Payne)

Nay, tell me now in what strange air
The Roman Flora dwells to-day. (Lang)

Tell me now in what hidden way is
Lady Flora, the lovely Roman? (Rossetti)

Often has this opening been deservedly praised. But let the student persevere in the comparison, and it is a temptation too strong for us to bring out, here and now, the difficult lines concerning the "beatified maid:"

Et Jehanne, la bonne Lorraine,
Ou 'Anglois brulèrent à Rouen;
Où sont ils, Vierge Souveraine?

Where is Joan, whom English flame
Gave, at Rouen, death and fame?
Where are all? Does any know? (Castello)

And Joan the Maid,
The good Lorrainer, the English bare
Captive to Rouen and burned her there;
Where are they, Virgin debonair? (Payne)

Good Joan, whom English did betray
In Rouen town and burned her? No,
Maiden and Queen, no man may say: (Lang)

And that good Joan whom Englishmen
At Rouen doomed and burned her there,—
Mother of God, where are they then? (Rossetti)

Once again it may be objected that this particular piece of translation is an original inspiration of Rossetti's. Very well, and so be it. The point of the present writer is exactly that Rossetti had just such inspirations in an almost continuous se-

ries. The ballade made by Villon at his mother's request troubles Rossetti no little by such ultra orthodox terms as "sin" and "sinner," which he periphrastically avoids, as suggestive in English of a nasal tone. There is a difficulty, too, in the poem's stress on trans-substantiation, and the Virgin birth, which to an English ear seems strange, and perchance (*mirabile dictu*) indelicate: Hence, a reconception of the last four lines in the second stanza; which is, we cannot but think, more effective than a direct translation must always turn out to be in this particular case:

Preservez moy, que point je ne face ce;
Vierge portant, sans rompure encourir,
Le sacrement qu'on célèbre à la messe.
En ceste foi je vueil vivre et mourir.

Assoilzie me, that I may have no teen,
Maid, that without breach of Virginity
Didst bear our Lord that in the Host is seen.
In this belief I will to live and die. **(Payne)**

Oh, help me lest in vain for me should pass
(Sweet Virgin that shalt have no loss thereby!)
The blessed Host, and sacring of the Mass.
Even in this faith I choose to live and die. **(Rossetti)***

Let, however, in all candor, the comparison of the entire ballade be instituted, and there can remain little doubt of Mr. Rossetti's superiority, although Mr. Payne knows his old French better, and strives honestly enough for archaic atmosphere in English, and fails not to achieve, on the whole, a level of craftsmanship surpassed only perhaps by two or three English translators of very modern times.

* In translating Villon, Swinburne alone seems to be Rossetti's peer.

But what we have been at such great pains to exhibit, namely: Dante Gabriel Rossetti's great eminence as a translator has for us at present only this primary importance, namely, that he, our greatest translator, is paraphrast not for convenience sake, but from linguistic and aesthetic necessity, a goodly part of the time; and that paraphrase, if poetically legitimate, does not constitute a mere detached periphrasis of an untranslatable phrase, but is the result of fresh visualization of the original poet's vision, so that the altered expression is as legitimate a product of the first vital idea of the poem, as that for which it becomes an inevitable substitute.

V. A Curious Instance.

Now, for the proof of this proposition, we have a most interesting illustration, which will, for readers steeped in mere textual criticism long wonted to the quite mechanical hanging of masterpieces on mere circumstantial evidence, border on the incredible and occult! Antoine-Vincent Arnault[10] wrote after the Battle of Waterloo a little elegy in parable form to the Princess Hortense, in which Napoleon is the oak, storm-stricken; Arnault the wind-driven leaf, and, at the end, the laurel leaf; Hortense the petal of the rose. Leopardi liked the little poem, but either was not aware of the original allusions, or ignored them wilfully. Be that as it may, he omit-

[10] 1766-1834.

ted, in translating, the three passages italicized in the French and introduced the words and phrases italicized in the Italian, entitling his derivative poem, "*Imitazione.*"

LA FEUILLE.

De ta tige detachée,
Pauvre feuille *desséchée.*
Ou vas-tu? *Je n'en sais rien.*
L'orage a brisé le chêne
Qui seul était mon *soutien.*
De son inconstante *haleine,*
Le zephyr ou l' quilon
Depuis ce jour me promène
De la forêt à la plaine,
De la montagne au vallon.
Je vais où le vent me mène,
Sans me plaindre ou m'effrayer:
Je vais ou va toute chose,
Où va la feuille de rose
Et la feuille de laurier. (Arnault. '15)

IMITAZIONE

Lungi dal proprio ramo,
Povera foglia *frale,*
Dove vai tu? Dal *faggio*
Là *dov'io nacqui,* mi divise il vento.
Esso, *tornando,* a volo
Dal bosco alla campagna,
Dalla valle mi *porta* alla montagna.
Vo *pellagrina,* e *tutto l'altro ignoro.*
Vo dove ogni altra cosa,
Dove *naturalmente*
Va la folgia di rosa,
E la folgia d'alloro. (Leopardi. '31-'35)

Now it is most noteworthy that "frale" (fragile) for desséchée" (withered), "pellegrina" (a pilgrim, wanderer) and "porta" (carries) for "me promène" (drives me), increase the universal pathetic applicability with a deepened sense of frailty and fatality. The loss of the storm, on the

contrary, that breaks the oak,[11] the substitution of the brief "tornado" (turning) for "inconstante haleine, le zephyr ou l'aquilon" (intermittent breath, the zephyr or the winter wind), makes the objective reality less vivid and dramatic. The most important change, however, is the substitution of "tutto l'altro ignoro" (all else I know not), intimating an agnostic despair, instead of "Je n'en sais rien," at the beginning of the leaf's reply, which merely denied knowledge of its destined direction. "Sans me plaindre on me'effrayer" insinuated a militant, stoic feeling, which is out of keeping with Leopardi's sentimental doctrine of humanitarianism, based on pessimism: and "Seco perpetuamente" (forever with the wind) and "naturalmente" (by course of nature's law) added to the whither of all things, makes the pessimism absolute and philosophically necessary.

Rightly, to be sure, did Leopardi omit any reference to Arnault's poem in the title of his piece. Too great and true a poet was he to suppose his *Imitazione* any fair equivalent of *La Feuille.*

Now, it so happened that Dante Gabriel Rossetti read and was drawn to Leopardi's poem. It set him to musing, and finally, to versifying, with the result of "The Leaf;"[11] which we print with all departures from the Italian italicized:

[11] In Leopardi *chêne* become *faggio* (beech) instead of *quercia*, probably because of difference in sentiment (pathos, instead of stoic valor); and the English love of the oak restored the original tree chosen as Jove's, and therefore Napoleon's.

THE LEAF

Torn from your parent bough,
Poor leaf all *withered* now,
  Where go you? *"I cannot tell.*
Storm stricken is the oak-tree
  Where I grew, whence I fell.
Changeful continually,
  The zephyr and hurricane
Since that day bid me *flee*
From deepest woods to the lea,
  From highest hills to the plain.
Where the wind carries me
  I go without fear or grief:
I go whither each one goes;
Thither the leaf of the rose,
  And thither the laurel-leaf." ('69-73)

IMITAZIONE

Lungi dal proprio ramo,
Povera foglia frale,
Dove vai tu? Dal faggio
La dov'io nacqui, mi divise il vento.
Esso, tornando, a volo
Dal bosco alla campagna,
Dalla valle mi porta alla montagna.
Vo pellagrina, e tutto l'altro ignoro.
Vo dove ogni altra cosa,
Dove naturalmente
Va la foglia de rosa,
E la foglia d'alloro. (Leopardi)

Note that "Dov' io nacqui" (where I was born) is represented above by "parent," inapplicable, of course, to Napoleon. "Perpetuamente" (perpetually) is properly transferred from the flight to the changefulness of the wind, as "continually." The feeling of "pellegrina" (pilgrim) is excluded. The agnosticism of "tutto l'altro ignoro" disappears; and also the scientific fatalism of "naturalmente." On the other hand, the circumstances of the storm reappears, and along with it the stoic refusal to complain or cherish fear.

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Depuis ce jour me promène
Da la forêt à la plaine
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Je vais où le vent me mène,
Sans me plaindre on m'effrayer:
Je vais où va toute chose
Où va la feuille de rose
Et la feuille de laurier.

Corroborative evidence for our interesting contention may be had by comparing German translations respectively of *"La Feuille"* and of *"Imitazione."* But the English reader may be grateful to us if we subjoin for his convenience a translation somewhat loose of Leopardi's poem by Frederick Townsend, for comparison with Rossetti's resuscitation of the original.

IMITATION[12]

Wandering from the parent bough,
Little, trembling leaf,
Whither goest thou?
"From the beech where I was born,
By the north wind was I torn.
Him I follow in his flight,
Over mountain, over vale,
From the forest to the plain,
Up the hill, and down again,
With him ever on the way.
More than that I cannot say.
Where I go must all things go,
Gentle, simple, high and low,
Leaves of laurel, leaves of rose;
Whither, Heaven only knows!" ('87)

Now we hesitated to utilize this extraordinary instance of a peep into the translator's workshop, merely on the evidence of editions, or the explicit note even of the editor of the authorized edition. In reply to an inquiry, a valuable communication was obtained from Mr. William Michael Rossetti, which we print in an appendix. He substantiated what had been gathered from the authorized edition, but seemed somewhat alarmed at the reference in the letter of inquiry to his brother's gift of visualization. These are days of strange doctrine. No wonder Mr. Rossetti waxed suspicious, reading the cabalistic words "gift of visualization!" True, both he and his brother honored William Blake, but that was ere Blavatzkiism, Babism, Eddyism and popular misapplications of Psychic Research had made the atmosphere unpleasant for merely literary and disinterested mystics.

[12] *Poems of Giacomo Leopardi.* Translated by Fred. Townsend. Putnams, 1887. Thirty-eight Poems.

Well, if the letter which we reprint in full bears conclusive testimony, there is but one theory before us; namely, that Rossetti did with Leopardi's poem just what Leopardi had done with Arnault's; this difference only obtaining, that Leopardi philosophized. Consequently, in every case of change from Leopardi's poem, Rossetti returned unconsciously to Arnault's apologue; not certainly because of any supernatural persistence of the original poem, mystically suggesting itself ghostwise to the third poet; but simply because the elements Rossetti omitted were philosophic and undramatic, and those he introduced into his supposed original were dramatic and sensuously imaginative and natural to the primary conception.

Now Rossetti did not totally restore the original poem. Slight vestiges remain of Leopardi in "parent," "carries me," "changeful." "Each one goes" is an infelicity, due to the difficulty of poeticaly rendering "ogni altra cosa" (everything besides), which rationally particularized a little in Leopardi on the "toute chose" (everything) of the original.

Clearly Rossetti did not know the story of Arnault's poem at the time he made his translation, whatever may have been the case at some later date. For certainly he could not have credited Leopardi with furnishing him the original, had he known Arnault's poem; and much less, had he known it, could he have thought it a translation of the Italian, when he found himself persistently

preferring the supposed translation to the supposed original, in every departure from the same. Turn the matter over and over again, however the reader sceptical in matters aesthetic may do, the stubborn fact remains that Rossetti *restored almost absolutely from a translation an original poem which he did not know existed,* merely because, when translating, Rossetti rendered conception by conception, not phrase by phrase; nay, in fact, before he rendered any conception whatever, reconceived and recomposed and livingly reconstructed the whole in his mind, and then alone addressed himself to translating conception by conception with such liberties as the visualized whole seemed to warrant or suggest. And this we would maintain is but a most striking exemplification of the process of true translation.[13]

VI. THE MAIN CONTENTION.

If the point we have endeavored to establish (for which we make no claims to original discovery) be accepted in good faith, then it will indeed be difficult to refuse acceptance of the further contention of this paper, namely: that *translation offers a pedagogical method for the teaching of literature as an art.*

[13] The second letter of Mr. Rossetti, in response to further more explicit inquiry, does much to support the views here expressed, and those implied as their background, although it takes issue with us mistakenly, we cannot but think, in the matter of the detail analysis of Rossetti's *Leaf*. Mr. Rossetti, however, had only a letter and not this present detailed statement before him of the three poems and their relations.

It is indeed pleasant to reflect that in urging the formation of graduate schools for teaching the Art of Translation at our Universities, we should be carrying out the suggestions of that first great American teacher of Literature, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who, in his "*Poets and Poetry of Europe*," pointed us the way to a cosmopolitan culture, and what is more, set us the brave example, seeking not originality and priority of devising, like a Poe, or a Whitman; ambitious merely of a sane, large-hearted recreation of things positively known to be beautiful; and the production, then, of such things, as should bear lovely likeness to them, out of materials that offer themselves to the cultured artist on our continent, and at home in our special civilization and nation.[14]

Yes, the poetry of Longfellow may suffer from the limitations of his individual genius, from his involvement in an ephemeral phase of the Romantic movement, from his appearance too early in our cultivation of aesthetic self-confidence; but the gracious catholicity of his spirit, his modest avocation to the translator's self-denying but most cultivating and satisfying art,—these, at all events (whatsoever may befall his poetic fame), are to be our inheritance forever as a people, and

[14] We would not be supposed wholly unappreciative of Poe's verse technique, much less of Whitman's very important, though not clearly understood, discoveries in poetic composition. The intention is only to vindicate Longfellow from the silly charges of plagiarism, and the unfortunate but natural reaction from an enthusiastic overpraise which made a sane German critic denominate him the American Goethe!

a compelling power unto a new birth of our American Literature.

For not to no purpose, must we believe, are we thus, by origin, of many nations and languages; and if America shall become in truth the cultural fulfillment of Europe's prophetic hope, she will not be a New England but a New Europe. Then the preachers and promoters of her larger National life, unto the appearance of her original seers and world-poets, will be the Translators, who make live for us, together in a social whole, the several great and noble spirits of every people, physically or spiritually ancestral to our own that is to be! Shakespeare and Milton shall have to welcome on equal terms, in this their new Empire, Dante, Molière, Goethe and a score more of their peers, "bards of passion and of mirth." And unto this consummation let the present paper be only, for aught we care—if our disallower would so phrase it—the raucous crow of a cockerel on a rail fence, in the sublime face of the vast "Rose of Dawn!"

THE UTILITY OF BEAUTY.

I.

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever" is the rapturous utterance of a very young man. Only too soon do we discover that the "law of diminishing returns" is operative in the realm of the æsthetic and spiritual quite as surely, though more slowly, than in the realm of sensation. As with the drug the dose has to be increased, as in every sensational experience, if protracted, the stimulus has to become more emphatic or subtly penetrant; so we find that for sensitiveness to things spiritual and lovely, the appeal, if protracted or continuous, requires some sort of rebirth of us, the subject,—some refreshment, dipping into the fount of youth—if our rapture, our ecstasy, nay, our pleasurable excitement, is to continue increasing or constant.

Relative novelty, then, must always remain an element of importance in our judgments, though we freely admit that the best test of things artistic is, nevertheless: can they endure familiarity without a resulting indifference or contempt on our part? It is not that the old things are worse, but that our powers fail us, and that we need variety in the appeal, however willing we may be to compel some measure thereto of attention. How

much more is this the case if we desire to create a profound emotional interest? Coleridge's "Ode to Dejection" is not the morbid record of a merely personal degeneracy. Beauty, while it has undoubtedly its objective follies, if one might so say, is as a psychic experience dependent upon a certain resiliency and superabundance of spirit in us. "Joy is the beauty-making power" and "we in ourselves rejoice." Should we become disappointed with self and this fount therefore of inner delight run dry, we shall, like Coleridge, "see, not feel, how beautiful they are:"—those clouds piling golden about the setting sun; those seas stretching before us cold to the dawn; those mountains reaching wistfully into the blue; those lovely valleys filled with idyllic hopes and delicious, delicate eccentricities of coloring and form; those marvelous intricate aspirations in stone, the Gothic cathedrals; those quiet, serene, because self-controlled, perfections of the Greek sculptor; those epics and dramas that have fed the higher soul of our civilization for many centuries without indications of failing power to provide and bless.

Now, is there any escape from this dying out in us of that experience which as we grow older we need but more and more sorely? The adolescent in very deed do have their world in them; they suffice unto themselves. Their eyes are closed by a spell save to their own reflections in the universal looking-glass. They do not seem to need even

God. They do not require the support of art. Only a few temperamentally melancholy, supersensitive, subtly unsocial among them, seem to desire anything besides food and shelter and expenditure of energy, noisy companionship, and wherever cheaply to be had—a circle of adoring elders! The hunger and thirst for righteousness does not become an ache until we have known sin face to face—fought it hand to hand. The yearning for beauty, likewise, does not become a compelling passion until we have experienced ugliness. When the days of splendid self-enthronement are over—when we awake—when we cry out godless for a God, hideous for art, besmirched for purity,—then we are already jaded, stand disillusioned and clear-sighted with Coleridge—forever this side Jordan! But right here do we get a suggestion, offered us by the mother who lives her life over again in her daughter whom she is introducing to society; by the father who is making a place in the business world for his son. When we, on our own account, cease to respond, for any reason whatever, to a given stimulus, we can indirectly, through sympathy, obtain a reaction thereto in ourself, by imparting to another the experience of the joy we once had ourself; and that perhaps is why I take my favorite book from the shelf most often when my friend is with me. I know what it contains; I know it is noble, lovely, exquisite, holy; I fear to discover that I am dull of sight, hard of hearing, and I leave the book unopened when alone.

So, to use theological language, "faith" leads to "works" because "works" preserve and restore "faith." The very self-preservative instinct of "faith" impels the faithful to "works." It is after all, then, no altruistic impulse in us which makes us artist, preacher, proselytizer, teacher, special pleader for things divine.

In Browning's "Pauline," the gifted youth who refuses to embody his ideas in definite language (because he prefers to admire his shifting day-dream world and adore himself as its creator) will suffer that decline of his image-making power, so subtly analyzed by Browning later in the piteous case of Sordello. He who refuses his endeavor to glorify his God by obtaining for Him the praise of others will sooner or later forfeit the bliss of worship, which, to save himself from odious comparisons of present with past and consequent despair, he shall have to secure somehow.

Quite apart from any pride in creation, any ambitious longings for fame or fortune, every sincere lover of beauty sooner or later will find stirring in himself this missionary zeal. Hence, the enduring of poetic birth-pains, of hopes deferred, of remorse at failures, of shame incident to disparagement and misunderstanding; and all evermore solely, however unawares, for the one and selfsame "cause:" an ever fresh revelation to himself, in all her virgin loveliness, of Lady Beauty.

II.

To obtain a definition of art is no easy matter, and the reason perhaps is that every artist sets forth from the particulars of his special art, and therefore arrives at a conclusion insufficiently general to satisfy his brethren who worship Lady Beauty according to another rite. When Molière humorously presents us with the oft-mentioned picture of that *naif enfant terrible,* his Bourgeois, crying out, "And when I say 'fetch my slippers,' is that prose? Have I been talking prose all my life without knowing it?" it is of course the pedantic rhetorician who is coming in for good-natured criticism, quite as much as the Bourgeois. Prose, if we mean by it an art-form, is not stumbled into by most of us. To be natural is not always to be gracious, noble, or even interesting. The masters of prose are fewer in number than the masters of verse. Just because the rules of the technique of prose-expression are more unseizable and manifold, because the range is greater and the shadings more delicate, it would be less likely for a man to stumble into prose than into verse. Language having its daily, hourly utilities as a medium of haphazard human intercourse is one thing; and quite another thing is language seized upon by the holy spirit of man for the ennoblement of things expressed, for the enlargement of the hearer and reader, to the vanishing of horizon limits, to the intensive realiza-

tion of the life of the body and the soul. And it is so with all other materials, not merely with language. But perhaps no art suffers so much as literary art by the inevitable confusion of terms. Cyclopædias are not literature. Newspaper writing very rarely makes even an effort to be literature. Most of the fiction devoured by the readers who have learned the three R's, but never served their apprenticeship, never applied for a novitiate, are mere panderings, mere pretenses—utilities that hardly rank with cabbage leaf tobacco, cereal coffee, but—surely they are in no sense "art." For, as not all verbal expression is art,—prose or verse,—so not all drawing, all sculpting, all thrumming and strumming is art. Expression, to be sure, it is; but only expression that arrests attention, conveys intention, and produces distention, can rightly be considered art. It is only such expression as impresses with the worth of what is expressed by the manner of the expression, that deserves the name; and to be true art, the impression of worth must be in due proportion to the presumed importance of what is expressed.

The question, of course, may be raised, "Why art at all?" to which we should answer, "Why expression at all of any sort?" "Speech is silver and silence is golden." Why not then the golden standard forever and aye, "Aum and ecstasy?" We should be disposed to reply: Because "Aum and ecstasy" are reasonably possi-

ble only to the cross-legged Yogi with milleniums of rice diet. To us carnivorous folk who do and die, who are essentially active and not contemplative, to whom rest is incident to work, for whom the night is the interval between day and day, what we need is not "Aum and ecstasy," not golden silence, but noble and ennobling speech. If we are racially compelled to utterance, if we can never say die while alive, and if living to us means doing, then art becomes a temperamental religious necessity, a *sine qua non* of exaltation and ideal apotheosis for the men of our European and American stocks.

The highest intelligent man of our race may not be blessed like William Blake with fourfold vision; Beulah may for him be a promised land; and much more so that realm unpromised where one beholds the unseen, the unthinkable. But to him at least is granted twofold vision always: things-as-they-are, and things-as-they-might-be and are not; as they are not, though they were such perhaps, and are to be such again some time. He may endeavor to give his ideal world a home in the mystic past: some golden age of innocency, some Eden-life unfallen, some time when the Gods walked patently with man. Or, like the modern evolutionist, he may project his ideal world forward into the ages to come. In either case the contrast remains: the world-as-it-is, the world-as-it-can-be-thought.

To the world-as-it-is the practical man is closely

related. In the world-as-it-might-be the man of the spirit claims his citizenship. Now things-as-they-are compel us to see them, and things-as-they-were-or-are-to-be must seem therefore relatively unreal. The body makes its hunger felt, when the spirit will starve without a murmur. We live in the present, and we can not afford to be absent-minded or absent-hearted. If, however, the present be sordid, base, ignoble, mean, shall not we ourselves be assimilated to it, and become sordid, base, ignoble, mean? The seer in the sty? The poet in the garret? Young love in a cottage? True, and when we are seers, all anointed inevitably; when we are poets of unfailing aspiration and inspiration; when we are immortal lovers having bathed in Morris's Well at the World's End; then can we safely inhabit cottage, attic, or sty. When, in other words, we have the child's power of touching our environment with the fairy-wand, and making the garbage-barrel in the back yard become a pile of multi-colored precious things strewn with diamonds; then it may be safe for us. When pumpkin will do for carriage, and rats for coachmen, we do not need art, because we have not yet the need of twofold vision. We do do not see things-as-they-are at all; we only see things-as-they-might-be. But then, on the other hand, our social value to the world is well nigh lost. We are hermits, harmless egomaniacs, or children grown up, (that most awful thing)—the little babe by increase of dimension become the

simpering idiot. But, even for idealism's sake, we *must* live in the world of things-as-they-are and we must take cognizance of the relations of things in that world; for if ever the world of things-as-they-are is to realize in part our vision of things-as-they-might-be, it will not be through hocus pocus, self-deception, not through Eddyite denials of the obvious; but through honest recognition of facts and courageous affirmations in long protracted toil, that will result in bringing our two discrepant worlds at least to partial reconciliation, and the soul to some degree of merited peace. For so long as these worlds are wholly apart and hostile, we ourselves must suffer a species of dichotomy. To say the least, our amphibious life becomes distressing, and we tend to ignore or deny that world which will most brook ignoring or denial. At best we will drift with the current only, instead of outspeeding it by oar or sail. Now it is expressly to save us from thus being drifted with the current that art is summoned to our aid.

We may arrive then at some notion of what art is by clearly recognizing its human service. To make us see things-as-they-are-not with some measure of distinctness, and make us believe in that vision it has granted us; to make us discern intellectual realities as vividly as we are often compelled to suffer the grosser realities of sense; this is the function of art. Not that every ideal is better than the actual. There may be ideals in-

finitely worse than the actual. Only the ideal, that which ought (as we say) to be, is among the things that are not; and, in order really to discern the worth of that particular possibility, we must appeal to sense and emotion. If it be found worthy, we may then anticipate development and contribute therefore "to the shortening of the times." If it be found unworthy, we shall have, by our own imaginative experience of it, forever perchance, quenched to the soul's profit, a false and vicious hope.

Progress is at the risk of degeneracy, and the visions of things ideal, the art prophetic and poetic, may serve Ahriman as well as Ormuzd. This proviso we frankly make, and proceed to restate what we deem to be the office of art: to create an appearance that can compete with actuality, not by delusion causing a hallucinatory error, but by illusion; an association, that is to say, with what is real, establishing some arbitrary point of contact between the sense-world and the world of ideas, a form forced upon stone, a meaning injected into words, an incantation made into sounds competent to call up some specific emotion. And all this that we may see things-as-they-are-not, knowing that they are not actually, but are in a deeper sense for us already real, real as tree in acorn, real as rose in slip, and that they may and must indeed come to be actual for us or in us, or for and in our offspring, the men that yet shall be.

III.

Let us revert again to what we mean by idealization. We have heard so much of realism and naturalism that many suppose to idealize is to be wilfully fantastic, absurd, maudlin, to reveal a childish or senile incompetency of some sort. The fact is that the extremest theoretical realist or naturalist never for one instant in his practice expects to take the world haphazard as he finds it. When my landscapist friend says that everything "has an interesting aspect", and that therefore one need have no care for selection of subjects for art, he tucks away into his word "aspect" that process of selection so essential to art, and which he is unaware of, because it is instinctive. Even the photographer must "compose." He must not only dispose his matter with reference to his point of view, but he must relate the parts of his subject with reference to a united significant effect; he must, in other words, extricate the to him essential from the insignificant details. If our artist works in terms of time rather than of space, as epic or dramatic poet, he must show a consciousness of the cause in the effect; insinuate what is possible in the mere appearance of what is; make the latent, patent, so to say; the generic, vital; and the meaning, inherent. He must emphasize and individualize; seize and eternalize the moment or sequence of moments in the

progress of events; isolate aspects of things; in a word, anticipate evolution.

And all this the artist does; not of a set purpose, perhaps, but most persistently because he desires that his presentation, interpretation, or creation shall give us joy; that we shall feel a passion for it, a fear and awe of it, a tender devotion to it. These purposes he cannot achieve except by economizing our energy, directing us aright, saving us from the haphazards and bad luck, by the best road, or the well-defined grassy pathway; leaving us free only where we are safe, giving us just enough to do that we may share his joy of creation, and imagine that it is we who have discovered the meaning, that by us the value has been assigned to the vision, and that of us it obtains its symbolic worth, its sacramental halo.

Is there, however, no need of ethical criticism? Shall the artist make us hells as well as heavens? Shall he create for us the Witch of Hörsel with as guileless an innocency as the Venus Urania? Ah, it is only he who has not been fully initiated into the mysteries of art who fears for us the results of æsthetic freedom. Only what appeals to us in our highest, that does not incur the condemnation of our noblest, will maintain itself for long. The abominations of the fashion plate are misbegotten and born amiss into the world by the Trade-spirit; and the unholy monster straightway devours his own offspring. It is so of every other

abomination or mere virtuosity which is meaningless or abhorrent to the noble that abides withheld from vicious mutilation or self-murder in the veriest essence of man. False ideals, degrading experiences, can be bravely set forth in art; and though they may not be for all men, yet their very artistic treatment, if such they have received, will serve to disinfect and neutralize their inherent natural poison. Surely the "City of Dreadful Night" will minister to a mind diseased the æsthetic antidote, rather than encourage melancholia. The "Laus Veneris" may have been abused; but it has corrupted as yet probably no man or woman. The "Fleurs du Mal" whatever may be said against them in so far as they are art, have done the world no conspicuous harm. Whereas, to decree ethically what shall or shall not be endeavored by the artist, would mean the death of the art spirit. Let us not forget that every great prophet has been called dangerous and immoral and subversive of order by his contemporaries. Every great moral innovator must make experiments, and perhaps in his own person. If he is to discover new truth he should be at liberty to set aside all pre-judgments however right they may be, repeal all laws however prudent, and thereby ascertain afresh for himself and us what the veritable facts may be. Thus St. Paul assures us that insomuch as sin abounded, so much the more did grace abound. And Shelley, Byron and Goethe, and Heine, not assuredly unimpeachable in their private lives,

have served to advance in definiteness the moral ideal of the race; the error and weakness of the artist has served not less truly (nay more perhaps) than his success or virtue. The Bible has its obscene passages. Shakespeare might be wrested to a soul's destruction. Men have committed suicide after reading the "Sorrows of Werther,"—but so did the swine choke in the sea of Gennesareth!

Without freedom of the artist, no art; and without art, if you include in the term all those means to set before us the world-as-it-is-not-but-as-it-might-be, we are mere animals living to individual and associate animal ends. To be endowed with the power to compare, invent, and discover, to have all our activities leading to definitions of truth and good, and these being deprived of all real actualization here and now, in so far as they are felt to be the substance of our human life,—such a condition must cause that bitter despondency, an awful despair to supervene, which will throw us back upon our merely animal selves. What is truth? Where is good? Have these no reality save in idea? Are they malign ghosts haunting our sensual feast? So we doubt and disbelieve and suffer until art says yea to our hopes, and the ideal is real; and we are bid behold and worship. So art saves our faith in God, because it saves our faith in man as man.

The province then of art, we repeat, is to render sensible what we would have so. The Zeus?

The Apollo? Behold *the* Man. But the Laocoön? Ay? And Œdipus, Job, and Lear? The painful and the criminal even are by deeper understanding of life to be redeemed for us. We are to be carried in the chariot of fire unto the farther side of disillusion, beyond despondency. But the Satyr? The Pan? Here also art has the same office. Aristophanes, Molière, and George Meredith,—what do they endeavor to do but save us from our cynicism, from criticism reacting acidly upon our self? Is the world not good enough for us? Is there failure, inconsistency, absurdity? So much the better. The exception proves the rule. This perverse and absurd world could not maintain itself here at all, but that it is founded on the unshakable, and surrounded of the serene. If our intellect is confounded, it is but that we may be compelled to live with the Gods, and behold all things very good from the superhuman point of view. So in the true presentation of the ideal, in the redemption of the hideous and grotesque, in the reinterpretation of the perverse and contemptible (working idyllically, tragically, comically, humorously or satirically), art is always performing the same holy office: making us realize the world of vision in and through the world of sense.

IV.

But the practical man, the man who has spent perhaps the best years of his life in the midst of things-as-they-are, refuses altogether to recognize consciously and pay his devotions to the world of things-as-they-might-be. He will not read poetry except for information. Literature and sculpture and painting must for him immortalize incidents and events, subtly present him with usable psychology, be the weather prophet unto his shifty climate. He must have his little moral Q. E. D. tacked to the fable, or fancy he obtains a magic spell to improve his luck. If song and dance and procession are allowed, it is not for their loveliness but for their vanities and lubricity, their advertising value in pomp and show. He must have shelter that will make known his bank balance. He would have comfort, amusement, distraction, excitement for the miserable little leisure that his business leaves. If art will do these things he will accept of art. He recognizes the necessity of decorating the banquet hall, publishing his patriotism with bunting, receiving the president with illuminations and the diamond-studded shirt-bosom, because these things keep up faith in an era of prosperity! So your practical man always and always insists upon an immediate utilitarian service, if he is to invest even stolen goods in art. And the artist is apt to speak harshly of the practical man, consider him an out and out savage,

deserving only to be electrocuted—when artists shall control the government!

Fortunately for us the republic of Plato is not likely to be set up for a while. The poets will not be banished the land, neither will the philosophers make or administer the laws. The practical man, whatever his shortcomings, by his very contact with the world of things-as-they-are is trained to demand of art that one thing without which art cannot maintain itself true for any length of time. It is altogether too easy for the artist to build a Chinese wall about himself,—coteries, cliques, mutual admiration societies,—and circumscribe the realm of his goddess, Beauty, and render her worship impotent for social good. The practical man says, "show me the use of art, bring the world of things-as-they-might-be into specific and immediate touch with the world of things-as-they-are, at one point surely, at every point if possible." Now, whatever we think of him, we shall have to recognize the plain fact that the practical man will more and more inconsiderately urge upon us these demands. We, special pleaders for art, have really no choice but to conciliate the selfish nature in him, avoiding thus its hostilities which would neutralize for him all the spiritual efficacy of art; we must preoccupy the conscious mind of him whom we would cause to worship, so as to contract its circle of vigilance, distract it from the scrutiny of what it cannot comprehend, and thus effectively reach it as an irresistible suggestion

through the deeper, inner man. "Here is the useful, practical friend. I recommend art to you only—as useful!" And before he knows, the practical man finds his faith reviving, his will fortified, his love fanned to a blaze, and all these things seem to be a discovery of his own, an inspiration of his own, coming as they do to him out of himself. This is good pedagogic psychology. If art desires to convince, it must first then understand that for every man the most truly delightful is likely to be, in his present untutored state, part of what is to him uninteresting, tiresome, provoking, or positively repulsive. If we are to wheedle our prospective convert out of his prejudices, and if we be not proselyters, we are no teachers and deep impassioned lovers, we shall accomplish our design best by that highest art, a total concealment of art, that art which we are not always conscious of as admirers and adorers, because the producers thereof had themselves ceased to be conscious as producers, it being the product of long devoted habit, study, resolute addiction, blessed occurrences and inspirations. When art becomes deliberately and self-magnifyingly didactic; when art talks too self-oglingly of its "mission" and of its "message" with overmuch unction, when it struts about fantastically, crowns itself with laurel, and deports itself unseemly, art is, we doubt not, in imminent danger of perishing. So the demands of the practical man turn out to be but reinforcements of the highest demands of

the very poetic spirit in man. The practical man demands selflessness in poet and seer. And what is that but the one safe warrant of the effective working in and through him (the artist) of that higher self, that racial consciousness, *Zeit-geist*, muses, Holy Spirit,—call it what you please? Without it, true art has never come to being and power in the recorded past.

V.

It is for these reasons that the Arts and Crafts movement is to be held as salutary in spite of temporary aberrations, and the inevitable occasional exploitations of the general programme by canny Fras, and others of their industrious ilk. William Morris was more of a prophet as craftsman and salesman, than on the socialist platform. I want a chair for comfort. It shall serve my body first. My body only? Shall it serve me as it could serve an ape? "No," says the chair. "See when you are at leisure to see: I am rightly, honestly built, graceful and strong. I am honest; I am generous. I am for thee then not only as ape, but as normal man. If thou hast time and will to consider, he who made me was not a slave, a machine. He was as thou, my owner, or he could never have understood thy wants and made me for thee. When thou art with me, thou art also with the spirit of a friend and brother, and when thou hast leisure let me further whisper into thine ear: I

am not only for thee as thou art, but for thee as thou mightest be. Before thee were *men,* else were not I such; and after thee I am ready for thy children's children. My maker has anticipated their consciousness; what is dim in thee, and what thou therefore canst not see but dimly in me, shall be bright in them, and shall for them shine out brightly from me. I see the immortality of thy race, the immortality of the individual spirit, if there be further evolution for thee after death. I am of the noble past. I am for the nobler future." So it is that the beautiful chair becomes a prophet unto the weary and despondent worker, a cheerer, a comforter, a friend of the spirit. So it is that art takes our inner life and compels it to its higher possibilities, nay, rather impels and persuades, establishes the dominion of the fortunate moment, perennializes the instant of surest and sanest vision.

Thou hast been on the mount, O flushed seer, blessed singer, weaver of musical fancies, and thou hast beheld the ordinarily unseen? Very well indeed. Descend forthwith into the valley. Yet ere thou goest down, take with thee this shining stone, this flower, as tokens that thou hast been here communing with God. Thou sayest, "Why, am I not full enough of the vision?" True, thou art now full of the vision, but at the foot of the mount is the demoniac boy, and the multitudes of little faith. Take down with thee a tale, a sketch, a song, a dance, a little daub, a foolish

modeling, the plan of a structure; nay, not only to testify that thou hast seen, but to give unto others the desire to climb the mount whence thou sawest what thou canst but ill report!

To the present writer at all events it seems clear that without public glory there could not long be patriotism or civic pride; that order and self-subordination cannot be maintained on any large scale without a sense of worth in the whole of which we may be but an insignificant part; and that this sense of worth, in the whole which we must serve, needs must be set forth for us visibly, audibly, palpably in monument and building, in music and poetry and pageant; must be made to appeal to the carnal eye and ear and touch, if it is to conquer the rebellious lusts of the individual, and make him a joyous servant of society without other reward than his knightly joy. Not that art will suffice to do all this alone, but that all this cannot be done at all without art. How shall in fact the masses sustain and increase their faith in God without psalms, and temples, and eloquence of story and parable, and harp and organ, and voice; without procession and dance, spectacle and drama? Without art and such induced spiritual sight, faith in God, which is but higher faith in man, has never long remained the creative evidence of things unseen. Hence, we dare to affirm the sublime social, political, moral, religious utility of art to the civilized man in chief of our practical American society. And what needs

be done that we may obtain the loyal and generous obedience of our men of affairs, as also of our leaders of the people to the behests of art? Why, dear impracticable lover of thy goddess, convince them of the utility of Beauty. Assure them that beauty is not ashamed to be useful, to reach modestly and indirectly,—proud rather that she can never be true to herself without subserving the humblest as well as the loftiest uses of man.

A THEORY AND VINDICATION OF THE COMIC.

To write of the spirit of comedy in all seriousness seems droll enough, which is perhaps the reason there is in English no satisfactory treatise on the subject. The first effort with us at a statement of the nature of comedy is, so far as I know, Meredith's essay on "The Comic Spirit," of value assuredly to whoever is able to read it; yet, is one ever quite sure one has got out of it exactly what Meredith put into it? At all events it has not been popular, nor very generally illuminative. For my part I was obliged to do some thinking of my own (because, probably, I did not fully understand Mr. Meredith), and to present succinctly the results of that process is the purpose of this paper.

Comedy does not necessarily manifest itself in any one particular literary form. The word "comedy," therefore, as used in this paper, designates a spirit, a mood, an intellectual and emotional attitude which has, to be sure, manifested itself chiefly in drama, but had long ere that employed the fable, the epic, the ballad, or even the lyric poem, each in its way a congenial form.

The comic spirit follows close in the wake of

the tragic, because it proceeds in part from it. What seems to me the psychological view of the origin of comedy can be stated as follows: There is an instinct in every species for the preservation of the type. The barnyard fowl, distinguished by a coat of paint, is not envied. Considered singular, he is jocosely eliminated. It is the instinct of the species to preserve itself from whimsical variations. Monstrosities, produced naturally or artificially, are removed. A most fortunate instinct, only it operates less happily with man. Of animals the survivor is the most competent to meet the needs of his physical life. No variation can *maintain itself* unless distinctly in the direction of greater strength, speed, cunning, courage, love. But schoolyard and barnyard are in this respect unlike. With humanity the "fittest," using the word in its best sense, that of subserving the greater interests of the race, is not always by any means he who is best armed for defense, most competent to find the means of subsistence, most formidable in aggression. Wherefore it is an early discovery that when we have reached man this instinct requires some check.

While on the whole the brave man fares better than the coward, the bravest dies first, and always and inevitably must die first. It were, therefore, very well to be brave, yet not too brave, else one would be eliminated, without a chance to pass on one's special temperament and disposition, either by continuously obtruded example, or by

actual procreation and rearing of offspring. Now, therefore, the hero-song appears more or less a calamity song, the calamity gloried in as proving the hero to the uttermost, and the tragic spirit is the soul of this song which first assumes some such form as the popular ballad, the lay, the epic, yet ultimately finds its proper body in the well-knit drama. It compensates the hero for his life cut short, and it raises up offspring for him by setting forth his example when he is not there to do it in person. Thus tragedy may be termed a device to advance the species, obviating the danger first apparent in man's breed, of the "best," the most redoubtable, the most beautiful, inevitably perishing. So taught, we call him who perishes, because the best, a "fool," to be sure, but piteously add an epithet which changes everything, and as "God's fool" he imposes on us and exacts worship.

Now tragedy does not deter men from following in the footsteps of the "God's fool." On the contrary, it encourages, incites to rivalry, for, thanks to human courage, death allures, provided it be a death to some purpose. The death of the hero has worth then as a display of courage and an appeal to courage. Moreover, it assigns new work to its cause; it indicates the high purchase price of virtue, and is the main origin of moral values. Thus the hero's calamitous career does not dishearten; the death of the hero is not a punishment of his deserving, but a revelation, a precious

privilege, an ecstatic reward, an allurement of glory. Such is the *vis tragica* and the *ars tragica*: to set forth and further commend by an appeal to the æsthetic sense the reasons for such a death; to make it fascinate supernaturally because it leads without fail to some God, or some God-like perfection of man.

Now, when tragedy is well established, and has come to dominate the finer intellectual life of men, certain specious errors gain more or less general acceptance. First, since the hero is a singular person, all singular persons are, supposedly, heroes. The old instinct, tending to eliminate the peculiar, odd and strange, is quite reversed. Artistic dime museums are temples of a new religion, and set up therein, for popular worship, any person who is sufficiently singular! Every "monster" supposititiously a hero, godman, or avatar, is to be fostered and fended, lionized and aped! Second, and worse, as peace more and more settles down on the cultured community, the hero's role is perceived to be interesting, with peculiar immunities and perquisites; a role that can be affected with profit after some preliminary study. The "sham hero" then appears and breeds this kind prolifically. Now these two, the protected "monster" and the cunning "sham hero," result from the ascendency of the tragic spirit over the mind of civilized man.

A corrective is required which is instinctively and inevitably produced somewhat in this wise:

First, the tragedy, which has grown in intensity (each artist endeavoring to outbid his predecessor for popular favor), becomes so grossly exaggerated, makes so excessive a demand on the credulity of an ordinary person, that all honest awe passes away, and the common man, suddenly aware of his advantage, takes his revenge on the "hero," against whom, deep down in his soul, he has always cherished a grudge, because so arrogantly greater than himself. Putting it another way: by the natural, instinctive self-love of the "hero" the growth and development of tragedy along the line of least resistance occurs and accelerates. When it has traveled too far in the direction of melodrama, it is overtaken by the literary reaction, namely, the first attempt at artistic comedy, probably more or less of the nature of parody or burlesque. It exposes the "monster," and does so by a more heavy overcharging of all that the tragic artist has been doing or misdoing, till the product is quite incredible and preposterous, and supplies the occasion for an instant reversal of judgment and feeling. Soon the "sham hero," when burlesque has had its little turn, is directly attacked, without regard to tragedy, lurid and overcharged, and often the attack is conducted very subtly and cunningly. We have seen the "hero" and know just what he does in adversity (having always been in adversity, at least when officially presented to us), and so we are quite armed, if we be the "sham hero", for all

contingencies—except prosperity. Just as in the tragedy, therefore, the hero meets calamity, in comedy the cunning "sham hero" is embarrassed by not meeting the calamity when it fell due, and the "sham hero" openly convicts himself; or the calamity is held in such malign suspense that the honest "would-be-hero's" watchings have wearied him, until he betrays the fact that he is not altogether so well prepared for actual calamity as he had believed; that he had only been ready for the *appearance* of calamity, and not for the appearance of *calamity!* But, of course, the exposure of the "monster" and the "sham hero" and the foolish "would-be-hero" is the truest vindication of the real "hero"; wherefore we see comedy has but come to the rescue of tragedy at its critical hour, and is not its foe, but its loyal fellow and friend.

It is strange that history,in a frolicsome moment, when naming her first great comic artist should have perpetrated a pun. As his name etymologically affirms (or can be made to affirm by some violence to its integrity), Aristo-phanes was in his works a "display of the best,"—the best for his breed and race. What tragic artists like Æschylus and Sophocles had displayed by suffering, he displays and champions with laughter. The God of Life is still very good; and ecstasy (the stand out of and above self), his holiest boon; and enthusiasm, the sense of his divinity within, the pledge of his favor. But to illustrate the in-

timate connection between comedy and tragedy let just a few examples be suggested. The solemn balderdash of scholastics in theology and law without true literary expression; then Rabelais. Later, for similar reasons, Erasmus. The mediaeval romantic lay in verse, then volubly in multiple volumes,—and Don Quixote with Sancho of the Paunch ride forth. The first part of the "Tale of the Sorrowful Knight" was to kill a craze; the second, to kill his hero for fear others might live by exploiting him if he were left alive. Yet the result—a profound, world-moving comedy of the mad idealist and the gross man of the senses. Richardson, sweetish-sentimental, self-consciously chaste, and Fielding's "Joseph Andrews" and "Tom Jones." Or further back, the early tragedy of Marlowe, then comedy with Jonson and Shakespeare. Then tragedy once more. Shakespeare, Webster, Ford, and through Fletcher and Massinger to riotous comedy. Not that each mood always finds its worthy artist, but the sequence of moods and their interdependence remains for the historian to record, and the student of æsthetics to ponder.

II.

Now what is the psychology of the comic spirit? Why do we laugh? Should we go to the psychologist for counsel and the solution of our problem; he is so solemn a personage that he probably could not catch laughter in his laboratory to isolate and

analyze. Hence, we shall have to dispense with his aid as best we can. Two things suggest themselves without the aid of his profounder specialist wisdom, as indispensable conditions of the genesis of laughter.

First, a perception. That is the flattering trait of comedy, that in consequence of this prerequisite it is only for more or less intelligent people, such as we. A perception? Ah, yes, a perception of unreason. And that is not to be had, God willing, of any but reasonable individuals. A perception of illogicalness, incongruity, unfitness of means to ends! Hence, no comic perception without some knowledge of the world. And comedy notably does not belong to the young, nor appears to rejoice a wholly unsophisticated period. It comes most buxomly welcome to a period of accumulated experience, knowing what ought to happen, and therefore schooled to detect absurdity, should the opposite occur and soberly present its credentials. A perception, then, first and foremost.

Next, something else and more. To see things unreasonable and illogical, to realize the incongruities and the *mésalliances* of life, is not, I think, the essence of good cheer. Usually it might be expected to entail a fit of melancholy, spleenful disgust with life, or lachrymose despair of good. But when such a perception is preceded, ushered, guarded, and decorously followed up by an inveterate, stalwart, omnipresent optimism (often

true child of a good digestion); when it is compelled to hobnob with a vital, vigorous conviction as to the rightness of things, or their indefinite capacity for righting themselves or being righted; the faith that the universal order, odd to relate, will somehow continue quite well without even ourself to superintend evolution, and that God "manages," none knows how, in His Heaven after all, and on His earth much more than half the time at the worst; why, then, the above-mentioned perception of the incongruity, absurdity, perversity—inside-outness or upside-downness—results in another and totally different emotion than the classic blues of Burton and his bilious confraternity of all ages. This secondary emotion (dispelling the primary, should it have chanced to outrun faith a little and ventured into the open of consciousness) is the Comic. I cannot describe it, nor define it. I can only assert that it arises without fail from the perception aforesaid, if concurrent with that quick, essential "faith." Then you have the flash from the two poles, the meeting kiss of extremes.

But someone objects: there is also a laughter that proceeds *not* from faith? To be sure. Yet such laughter is of quite a different nature from that above called "comic." It is rather what we denote by "cynical," or, more picturesquely still, by "devilish laughter." It is due to a perception of incongruity and a perverse theory apparently demonstrated by it. The malignant joy arises

from vanity gratified, superior intelligence advertised, and the chance of the company which envious misery loves. It is an odious, dogmatic unfaith bred of "the dog in the manger," and fed on the shadows of "sour grapes;" a diet so unnutritious as to explain its ravenous hunger for any lickerish morsel of veritable mishap. The degrees of the sincerity of such a faith in evil and death will measure the hideousness of the laughter. A cynical moment may sometimes give the zest needed by comedy,—the zero point for vital temperatures, the minus to offset the plus; but a cynical piece of art is a contradiction in terms, as an art work must, to be such, please nobly, and no noble pleasure can be had (save by inhuman ghoul) from mere insults hurled by fiend's laughter at truth, good, and beauty, at man and God. It is most unfortunate that a careless use of the words has often caused the "cynical" and the "comic" to be confounded to the serious prejudice and misvaluation of the latter.

A brief summary may here be apposite. Comic emotion originates from the co-existence of a perception of incongruity and a persistent conviction, (not probably more than half conscious and in all likelihood quite unexplicit), that in despite of such incongruity things are right. The error, the failure, the insanity, if you please, of the particular life-form under consideration, only serves to emphasize the success of life on the whole, an instance of the exception cited for the more effective proof of the rule.

If we turn now to the victim of our comic perception, to the mask, type, role realized for the nonce in a living individual as a person, we find ourselves obliged to recognize a distinction created by the mood in which we envisage him and his predicament. If the victim is regarded as responsible morally for what he misdoes and suffers, if his errors, sins, shames, are all held to be of his own wilful, stupid making, then we are perhaps aware of a certain antipathy for him, or indignation; and our laughter is of the sort known as "satiric." The satire may become so virulent as to lapse into invective and irate diatribe, till it lose every vestige of artistic form and charm. On the other hand, if the victim is plainly not responsible, or if we feel kindly towards him, moved of our common kinship and kind, and endeavor to make out to ourselves that he is not really responsible,—but some fate, genius, imp of ill luck, sprite of goodhap, whim of dame fortune,—we look at everything the victim does and says quite differently. The laughter is gentle-natured, and the comedy of the variety called "humor" may range to "farce" and vulgar "horse play," when it waxes uproariously rollicking, thus easily straying beyond the limits of art.

Out of sympathy and antipathy, then, for the "victim" of the comic perception arises the distinction we denominate "humor" and "satire"; and should that personal feeling caper too madly for the restraints of good breeding and artistic

form, they degenerate; and this degeneration is shown in a coarsening of the caricature which most inevitably characterizes such comic work.

If, however, the "victim" is considered neither responsible nor irresponsible, or as both at the same time for divers reasons, we have the shake of the brain rather than of the belly, betraying itself in the unwicked twinkle of the eye, and the gracious waver of the mouth-corners; the dispassionate laughter of the gods on Olympus, whence the inspiration for impartial, divine comedy (in a truer sense than Dante's), as playful on pure surfaces, disinfectantly severe to festering deeps like the rays of the all-seeing sun, yet ever uninvolved, unembittered, not forfeiting dignity, reposeful, serene, aloof. This supreme sort of comedy, neither humorous nor satiric, perchance an equal blend of both,—a chemical combination, not a mechanical mixture,—is difficult of production, and still more difficult of general understanding; the reason, simply that most folk are not habitually dwellers on Olympus, nor prepared to laugh sanely and sublimely with the immortals. So the comic artist, however serious and high his intention and stringent his self-imposed abidance by the subtlest laws of his art, asks frankly the assistance of humorous antic or satiric scowl; setting himself up now as a judge, again condescending as a fellow to the fool; now wit, now wag, now prophet, now clown, so as to sustain by digression the interest in his main work

of such as cannot for long relish the fine flavors of nectar and ambrosia; whose comic sense is situate in the major part of them, the belly rather than the brain, to borrow Meredith's epigram. Such is an explanation of the paucity of masterpieces in pure comic art, and the adequate apology for the usual blending of genres.

III.

Now the imposed brevity* of this paper forbids all specifications, illustrative suggestions, rebuttals of charges fair and foul. We cannot call for help on the great Molière, king once of the united kingdoms and scattered principalities of the comic, or his latest royal scion, King George, surnamed Meredith, no doubt on purpose that the populace might even to-day ascribe to him the authorship of "Lucile," and be caught unawares in a jest. The Daudet of "Numa Roumestan" and the Daudet, also, of the "Pope's Mule" and of "Tartarin de Tarascon"; Juvenal, austere and dire, and Ben Jonson, exquisite in "Volpone," brutally realistic in "Bartholomew Fair." Ah, for allowance, the girth a Falstaffian book might grant, to call up the shades—nay, materialize the men! Aristophanes of the "Birds" and the "Frogs"; Lucian of the "Trip to the Moon" and the Olympian and philosophic topsy-turvy-doms; La Fontaine of the "Fables," ay, and of the "Contes"

*For further suggestions, see Studies in Comic Literature, A Syllabus. University of Chicago Press, 1906.

(let us mention them *sotto voce*); Le Sage with his beloved ne'er-do-weel of a "Gil Blas," or Beaumarchais with the deviceful barber who loves "close shaves"; Rabelais, the ogre omnivorous and alas, obscene; Fielding, in eighteenth century costume, yet betrayed by his speech, lineage, and blood; Heine of the augustly droll "Atta Troll," of the North Sea with its salt winds of satire; Byron of the cutting "Don Juan"; Hugo of "les Châtiments"; Swift with his awful "Gulliver"; Nietzsche with his brillant "Zarathustra"—enthusiasts all (each in his way) for a diviner breed of men; Dickens or Thackeray; the sentimental Shakespeare of "As You Like It" and the serious Shakespeare of "Measure for Measure"; the savage ironies of the Bible, both Old and New Testament; the grim "bonhomie" of such a paternal "father" as Tertulian; the exquisite malice of such an anti-reformer and lover of monks as Erasmus! How one would like to put them each and all in the witness box, and proceed to swear them in! It is only right to state that whatever in this essay has been put with oracular dogmatism was gained by wholesome commerce with these worthies, now a bit and then a bit, and would not ever have been reduced to order, save for that need of defense felt by all of their friends and lovers against the advocates of an unjoyful, iniquitous, soporific gravity and gloom, who stalk abroad lugubriously devout in broadcloth or in sackcloth, to the shame of the earth and the despair of heaven.

Youth, for all its natural excess of happiness, nay, perchance because of it the rather, is wont at times to take itself with becoming seriousness and solemnity (not to say unction), with a flaunted yet blushful self-pity for its gifts of head and heart and their disproportionate terrestrial recognition. Its self-consciousness and naive egotism induce it to cherish the doleful domino, and hug philosophically the shadowed side of every street. The mature man, who has suffered much and survived more, knowing few hurts mortal, and fewer still, alas, immortal, walks out freely in the open, if such there be, and deems the road not ill. In our teens the gruesome elegies, and in the forties or ripe fifties the pyrotechnics of the boy! The truth is, perhaps, that what we contribute to our life is what we value most; in youth our melancholy, and later on our gaiety. Only what the spirit has created for itself will it make much of; and therefore it is the older man who is glad that the worst things are usually ready to hand, and the best things scarce, that he may address himself bravely to the production of these, and take a creator's joy in the process. If wilful optimism be the saddest pessimism as some maintain, we suppose a willess pessimism must be hilarious! Heine, at all events, is well aware that the future ages would scarce be edified to learn that he loved Agnes,—some Agnes or other, once upon a time,—any Agnes for the matter of that, saint or sinner,—if he should be permitted to write his

little legend across the firmamental blue, with a Norway spruce for a pen and the fire of Ætna for indelible red ink! He is romantic no more, and has wooed the comic muse. Figaro, on the other hand, has acquired the habit of instantaneous laughter at every turn of events, because of the long experience of misery. He laughs at once lest he should catch himself weeping; and he is sure one comes out better in the end by using one's wits, than by an inopportune abuse of the lachrymal ducts. Such his "brave philosophy"; and it wins the reader—and the day.

Molière, the sick man, mocks the physician of his times, and the sick man likewise, and then feels almost well; cheated husband and lover, he makes no end of mirth at the expense of male egotists who deem they hold securely human hearts in the hollow of either hand, or in the still hollower pretenses of their moral codes. Molière, the deeply religious man, exposes the pious hypocrite; impractical, often baffled enthusiast that he is, for sincerity and truth, he mercilessly assails in "Don Juan" the man who purposes always to be himself by indulging every whim, and in "Alceste" the consciously moral man who makes of his morality an anti-social force. Whom, then, has Molière been all the while victimizing, if not himself, or at least what was closest kin to him?

Is it fine to die in battle? Is it not as fine and finer may be to die for years by inches, and wittily, as Heine? If William Blake falls asleep

singing in songs of his own improvising the glory of his God, and triumphs over the world, the devil, and the flesh; what of Scarron, the tortured knot of nerves that flinches not nor wails, expiring in a jest that makes his friends about him riot with laughter for the last time?

Much, I fear, ought still to be said on this and many points, but, in conclusion, let me vindicate (or rather concisely suggest modes of vindication for) our inherent right to laugh with the masters and the gods; nay, if needs were at the very gods even, and the masters, or laugh (if such a thing as yet be thinkable) at what must normally seem greater to us than they—our own very selves.

First. Is laughter *irreligious?* On the contrary, laughter is religious, since it involves faith. Not necessarily a theological but a religious faith is at the core of it, a faith that if I perish the world will go on nevertheless; and perhaps if I should fall it may advantage the world, hard as that may be to believe! The Greeks went to the length of laughing at their god of laughter, not because he was *per se* ridiculous (for he is most deeply serious and worshipful), but because in laughing at the misconception of the god of laughter, they could summon him the sooner into their midst.

Second. Is laughter *unphilosophical?* Most assuredly. The comic artist always hates the philosopher and there is a reason for this. If Aristophanes pillories Socrates, it is not the fault of

Aristophanes, but of Socrates. Socrates is, after all, a sophist. He seeks to further the contemplative life. He would have us stop to think. But he who stops to think will never even start to do anything in this world. You do not want to stop for discussion, you want to go on and do, and discuss when you have done it, provided you are lucky and survive the deed, if not, some one else will, doubtless, have the leisure—and the pleasure. Socrates is, therefore, the natural enemy of Aristophanes, who stands for the active life, and believes in *un*consciousness, knowing that nothing can really satisfy which proceeds from self-consciousness, and therefore gaily offers men the ecstasy of self-oblivious laughter. Stop laughing, by all means, if you want to be a philosopher.*

THIRD. Is it *immoral?* That is a very important objection urged against comedy from generation to generation. It is not only not immoral, but it is the preservation of morals to cultivate by use, a faculty for all sorts of laughter. It is the hallucination of prevalent evil which drives men to despair. Now, evil always seems to be prevalent when you scrutinize it, for scrutiny involves confined attention to what lies immediately under the lens in the focused light. Being wherever we see, we surmise, nay, affirm it to be everywhere. But were it really everywhere, you and I could not be here to express such an opinion.

*Perhaps here (seriously speaking) we have the reason for the little help the philosophers give us for the understanding of our present subject!

Clearly, the thing to do, then, is to belittle the evil by fair means and foul, to undignify it, and so rob it of its horrors that we shall not lose wits or heart. By laughing at the evil, we get rid of the false impression of its omnipotence; we get a little courage, and our despair turns a somersault up into glory from the swinging trapeze of faith.

FOURTH. Is laughter *superficial?* Of course it is superficial. In one sense, however, and not in another. But then some people prefer to be driven as a plummet to the bottom of the sea, rather than float as a boat on the surface. The child comes into the world with the art of wailing perfect; the art of laughing has to be learned. Ignorance is bliss, and as we must have some bliss, we must have some ignorance, which would better be of the wilful sort, lest it be too summarily surprised by our city cousin's worldly wisdom. Distinguish, pray, between *ig*norance and ig*no*rance! If you call that "being superficial," let us be superficial, by all means.

FIFTH. Is laughter *unsympathetic?* This is another great objection raised against comedy. Of course it is unsympathetic; but, ought one to be always and everywhere sympathetic? Some people say one ought. "Laugh and the world laughs with you; weep and you weep alone." How sad! Thank God, when you weep everybody does not weep, that there is some limit to the spread of infection. Sympathy has value in life, great value, and it should be cultivated, but ought it to be

understood as "vicarious sensation," sensation for another through the imagination; and this sympathy can at most only tell me what is amiss, not what I should do to remedy the ill. Therefore, I shall not expect to be saved by sympathy. It is not sympathy that we require for social salvation, but good, simple common sense, the comic sense, which, neutralizing morbid egoism, does away with both *alter* and *ego*—leaves us a plain perspective—the gay bird's eye view of the gods.

SIXTH. Is the philosophy of laughter *unheroic?* I do not believe it. Let me compare briefly two men, Corneille and Molière, chosen because they stand in their characteristic attitudes for a complete contrast. Corneille is tragic; he tells us how to do and die, and live in the offspring of others we have inspired. Molière tells us how to be less intensively, extensively more, how to live and not die, how to rear offspring of our own for ourselves, and offspring, also, incidentally, for the departed heroes! Which is the nobler function? The hero sacrifices his social qualities to his individual perfection of a particular sort, whatever that may be; while the common man sacrifices his individuality to his social obligations, as he conceives them. The hero becomes a kind of specialist, while the poor common man has meaner but more manifold qualities. The reward of the hero is thoroughness and worship, which is a fine reward. The reward of the other is some love, perhaps, for his amiability. Then, you may

say, that one is an instance of a particular, definite perfection of life for which the world is not altogether ready; the other, an instance of the vital compromise which it demands. Which is the more heroic, in the sense of the courageous, of the twain? Think of it! Death unto life is the hero's way, the tragic method—surrender of society, surrender of love; and the way of the common man is,—the surrender of distinction, the surrender of worship, of ecstasy, of self-admiration,—in order to engage in the ordinary business of life. Which is really, all things reckoned, the greater man, the complete common man, or the complete hero? It may not be for us to choose which we shall endeavor to become, and our function is no doubt quite definitely settled for us already. Still, if it be settled in the paths of the common man, let us take this comfort: society needs us more, perhaps, even than she does the most harrowing heroes; and our high priest, the Comic Artist, is not without his special service, dignity and reward.

THE RELIGIOUS POETRY OF SCHILLER.

Five years ago an anniversary celebration of an "utterance into larger life" profoundly stirred the German world. In America it had its remote echo: the essay by Dr. Paul Carus, entitled "Friedrich Schiller, A Sketch of His Life, and an Appreciation of His Poetry," quoting passages and entire poems in translation from Bowring and Bulwer-Lytton.

Touching, to me, was the great "Volksangsgabe" or popular edition, containing, in 188 pages of double columns, fairly spaced and legible, the poems and the plays of the beloved singer of German ideals. A truly serviceable memorial, this, giving the poorest workingman at a nominal price enough to encourage and cheer, refine and charm any honest soul for a natural lifetime. A pathetic witness, too, our big honest, inexpensive quarto, to the pious love Schiller sang into the hearts of his countrymen. A great German poet all must admit him now; too rhetorical perhaps to endure translation so well as Goethe, having (but for Coleridge) never engaged the interest of a first-rate translator, almost limited therefore in appeal to his "speech-brethren" by his over-dependence on verbal melody and suggestive resonance

of phrases and the sad lack of some Fitzgerald; still, of the European singers and poets of the nineteenth century, he seems to-day only less universal than Heine and Leopardi; while none but Byron surpass him in cosmopolitan authority. De Musset appears by his side provincial, Tennyson dilettante, Carducci pedantic. Over-praised at first, and then impudently patronized, he survives for us as the incarnation of the spirit of Teutonic Philosophy; sublime hope beyond disillusion, exalted withdrawal to the hallowed privacy of the virile soul, stoic courage unto perfect self-mastery, when the lack of *Welt-politik* tempted his people to indulge in an inglorious hysterical *Welt-Schmerz*.

Who lives in glass houses should be gracious from prudential motives. And what translator does not dread a smooth pebble of the brook from the scrip of some ruddy shepherd boy? Yet here we are still dependent in the main on Edgar A. Bowring (nay, your pardon, Sir Edgar) for our diffused (or rather indiffused) English knowledge of Schiller. And, alas, what inconceivable ignorance of German was not his at critical moments! Particularly when we deal with the subtle poems of thought and spiritual insight does this failure to understand secondary meanings of the words and idiomatic turns of phrase become disastrous, if not irritatingly droll. When, for instance, because of "Schein's" several meanings, a "bond's falling due" is metamorphosed into the "fading

of a dream," we hardly know in so serious a poem as "Resignation,"—how we should becomingly take the unintended practical joke. Would that such things happened to us in life! And, alas, more miracles occur of this sort when least expected. For instance, in "Fortune" (Das Glück) the secret birth of Venus out of the infinite sea becomes an "ill-defined form," and poor Minerva is forced into an antithesis of sudden maturity; whereas the poet had intended both the gracious and the severe goddesses to illustrate the same principle of veiled beginnings for all things divinely great.

To our rescue came, eight years ago, a conscientious piece of translating that at times makes us long for a more elegant paraphrase—such as Fitzgerald gave us of Calderon—but, nevertheless, does manfully assist us to the straightforward sense for the most part, and to some intimation occasionally of the eloquent fervor.

But of such like irritating blunders enough. Must Schiller endure popularization among English lovers of poetry—through such a much-stained and smoked glass, lest the reader's eye be not compelled to see darkly enough for ethical enthusiasm and mystic glamours?

And yet of the two above indicated passages the latter only is well rendered by Arnold-Forster,[1] whereas the former follows Bowring into the same misunderstanding of the troublesome idiom.

[1] *The Poems of Schiller—E. P. Arnold-Forster.*

Years of earnest battling with problems intellectual, as they affected the real life-struggles of self and fellowman, have perhaps tended with some lovers of poetry, to an unconscious overstress of the didactic. Indubitably it was some such bias that induced Matthew Arnold to estimate so extravagantly the merits of Wordsworth and Byron, and to dis-esteem Percy Bysshe Shelley so pitifully. He could not, doubtless, perceive just how the subjective idealism of our most etherial singer might be turned to practical account in a British struggle for spiritual existence! So, aware of this peril, most of us at times are disposed, by reaction, to question our own longest and deepest loves for poetic oracles. Sophocles and Shakespeare and their admitted peers we will not hestitate to enthrone above temperamental disputes. But Leopardi, Hugo, Schiller (not to mention Arnold himself, Browning, Emerson, Tennyson and Rossetti), do modestly fetch a blush to our critical countenance, and haunt our proselyting courage with apologetic strains!

What shall a man say for himself when he remembers his boyish dotage on Longfellow; his unearthly thrills in the solitude of wood and mountain, when Schiller took him up astride his private Pegasus beyond the "intense inane"? Sweet memories, holy prejudices! Must we turn and rend the inspirers of our boyish years? Yet, on the other hand, shall we impose outgrown idolatries on those spirits of to-day who are born to

larger freedom of outlook, and a chaster, more educated taste?

Ever since that centennial celebration of the poet's death, I for one have been re-reading every little while my Schiller, blessing (with mental reservations) Sir Edgar and Bulwer-Lytton[2]—shaking my head at Arnold-Forster ominously and pondering an onslaught on them who superciliously venture to ignore the claims of Germany's darling bard.

A Burns, a Chatterton, a Keats in one; to these add a Wordsworth and a Landor; fail not to assume the "mighty line" of Marlowe, and somewhat of the youthful rebellion and melancholy of Byron—and then perhaps for him, who knows not Schiller in the original, a notion of the German adoration may gently dawn on his bewildered eye.

The ballads gave to Schiller the hearts of the plain people; the plays secured the more sophisticated; and on these two performances must rest no doubt his reputation. "The Ring of Polycrates," "The Cranes of Ibycus," "The Fight With the Dragon" and "The Diver"—are, by common consent, achievements of the very first order. Even to-day "Maria Stuart" and "Wilhelm Tell" appear gracious warm creations, that bind us with a spell of dramatic eloquence, which we are too grateful to disavow. Yet for those of us who believe in the prophetic office of the poet; who suspect that the test of life's aching needs is some warrant of

[2]The Poems and Ballads of Schiller—Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

moral truth in the preacher's deliverance; and that the æsthetic suasion of his form, coercing the sensitive poet, assists to correct spiritual extravagance, to render sweet and sane the religious quest; for those who, while they would not bring ethical and dogmatic criticism to bear directly on the creations of the poet—to gyve his feet or clip his pinions,—yet cannot but believe that (other things being equal) a poem gains much by its ability to feed our "moral being" and sustain our aspiration; for us and the like of us, surely, an inventory of Schiller's lyric and epigrammatic poems of moral and religious thought will not prove wholly valueless. For them, however, who reck nothing of such adventitious desert in things of beauty, we have no irate rebuke,—only a courteous dismissal to the exquisite company of the "art for art's sake" guides into Elysian fields.

II.

From the poems of Schiller's "first period" little falls within the scheme we have proposed. The afflatus of the "Robbers" is not to be denied. Lovers of the "Gothic romance," so-called, may rejoice therein. Anne Radcliffe, Monk Lewis, Bulwer-Lytton, Edgar Allen Poe & Co., should never be without a literary progeny. Yet, to have survived and outlived a "Storm and Stress" period of perfervid adolescence is, for a poet, no small luck and praise.

...nly in passing, the manful self-as-
...ressed itself in Burns' immortal
"A Man for a' That," and much
...regret to say, in Schiller's piece
"Mannerwürde," and his hon-
...mpous Pharisee:

...Who's more a man?
...to be? Go, spring
...d's shining sun,
...leap and sing!

...the sophistic mind
...a little gladlier purled;
...of human kind
...a better world.

...spirit immure,
...and behold, I can
...be a man!

...ored, however, by
...especially the
...), "Resigna-
...ands" (The
...his "Hymn of
...honor to be-
...Symphony. The
...votaries kin. And
...to possess her for-
...human race tri-
...assimilate in
...the personal
...self-expression.
...the vessels of
...deep. What

But, however fancy and imagination may so transport us, we return ever in due time to our own single self; and there in our life we front quite another spectacle:

No, I will fight this giant fight no longer,
The fight of duty and sacrifice.
If the heart's hot rage to soothe, thou be no stronger,
Virtue, ask not of me such cruel price.

Sworn have I, most bindingly have sworn it,
To wrestle with myself for mastery;
Have back thy victor's wreath; though I have worn it,
I'll wear it never. To sin let me be free!

What biographically the immediate nature of the fight may have been is of no poetic consequence. Indeed, the last stanza profits by its very ambiguity, thereby getting reaches of significance that belong to the uttermost of man's aspiration:

Fair and dear soul, trust not this angel-seeming,
For crime thy piteous kindness arms me now.
In the infinite realms with life's fair marvels teaming
Is there another fairer prize than thou?

Or than the very crime I flee from, ever?
O fate most tyrannous;—
The prize to crown my virtuous will's endeavor
Doth slay my virtue—thus!

Howbeit, only on condition of ascetic self-denial may higher quests enjoy their fair fruition. Not that any mystic merit of the sacrifice secures our reward. Not that there has been providential malice in the universal order requiring our deliberate purchase with pain of the more enduring pleasure. Merely, that to no one may all at once be granted. With our inevitable quite innocent limits of time and space and vitality, choice

So we .
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song, "A
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Far more
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Joy" (An d
come part of
Goddess of .
youth feels i
ever! The
umphed sign
our young e
value we a
"*Afflavit deu*
our foe are s
youthful hear

most pregnant epigram, however, with which the poem ends, is not Englished with sufficient pungency:

> **And Fancy, crushed by life's stern pressure,**
> **Lives but in poetry sublime,**

is more elegant, but not so direct as Bowring's,—

> **All that is to live in endless song**
> **Must in life-time first be drowned,**

although it was not Schiller who specified a watery grave!

Again our subject is the question of a definite choice. Immortal life in song (that is, long-continued influence through the better part of man, his imagination and craving for the ideal) must first make itself known, ay more, deliver its credentials by tragic catastrophe:

> **Wass unsterblich im Gesang soll leben,**
> **Muss im Leben untergehn.**

> **All that in Poesy shall live forever**
> **Must perish first in actual life.**

With this insight, the poet, Schiller, conscious of his divine call, could himself forego pleasure, and refrain from passion, not without intimations perhaps of his own early end. He, too, must accept his destiny, and serve as an incentive, and live so that the spell of his verse should be reinforced by the idealization of his personal career. Surely a fate deserving from happier men no unworthy pity!

Not that the young poet will fail at moments to regret the days of unreasonable expectations and hush melodious complaints which are them-

selves consolatory. So the elegy called "Ideals" makes an irresistible appeal to all who can love the palpitant life of youth in retrospect:

> Ah, cruel, must thou then depart
> And leave me joyless and alone,
> Forgetful of what joy and smart
> In close communion we have known?
> Can nothing thy departure stay,
> Thou golden stage of earthly time?
> 'Tis vain; thy billows roll away
> To the eternal sea sublime. (A-F., p. 113.)

For eight more stanzas Schiller reviews the losses and bewails them, ending as the undefeated man, whose vocation, and the fellowship it earns for him, suffice to keep him erect, with countenance of resolute cheer, face forward:

> Of all that merry company,—
> Which stood beside me to the last?
> Which comforted my parting sigh?
> Which will abide when all is past?
> Friendship, 'tis thou, whose healing balm
> Is lightly spread o'er every wound,
> Sharing our ills with loving calm;
> Thou whom I early sought and found.
>
> And, Labor, thou, who, hand in hand
> With her, can exercise the soul;
> Who canst all weariness withstand;
> Whose solid tasks with time unroll,
> Although thou travail, grain by grain,
> To rear Eternity sublime;
> Years, minutes, days, thou canst detain
> From the tremendous debt of Time. (p. 113.)

In two at least of the ballads we seem to hear echoes of that oracle that came to him, so unambiguous and not to be denied: "Whoso hath faith —abstain!"

The classical allegory of the divine envy serves to illustrate the principle that not all can be had

which the heart desires; nay, what is more, that all should not be had, even if accorded of a partial fate. Polycrates, after exhibitions of incredible good fortune is, admonished by his friend:

> Wouldst thou immunity from grief?
> Then pray the Gods, in kind relief,
> To shade thy luck with sorrow's tone.
> No man true happiness has gained
> On whom the generous Gods have rained
> Untempered benefits alone. (A.-F., p. 156.)

In the "Cranes of Ibycus," by the operation of an Æschylean Chorus of the Furies, two murderers of the expected winner of poetic laurels stand self-confessed. The awe is realized with great dramatic force, and we feel that somehow it was with Schiller a very real experience. He was not cold-bloodedly constructing a ballad to illustrate Kant's conception of the "categorical imperative"; he was imparting to us, by a tale, something of his own shudder at the mystery of conscience:

> And between truth and wonderment
> Each quaking heart with doubt is rent,
> And worships the tremendous might
> Which, all unseen, protects the right;
> Unfathomable, unexplained,
> By which the threads of Fate are spun,
> Deep in the human heart contained,—
> Yet ever hiding from the sun.[1] (A.-F., p. 162.)

But our quest of truth has ever been at the expense of conscience. Always the old was settled in rightful possession. The new appeared as rebel, as invader. The youth, therefore, who

[1] Again here our complaint is that the translation seems to narrow the broad statements somewhat more to the particular situation than do the resonant lines of the original stanza.

would unveil the Image of Truth at Sais was indeed to Schiller more than the hero of a legend.

> Far heavier than thou deemest
> Is this thin gauze, my son. Light to thy hand
> It may be—but most weighty to thy conscience.
> (Bowring, p. 191.)

He lifted the veil. He saw. And never did he publish his vision:—only lived to warn all questioners:

"Woe—woe to him who treads through guilt to TRUTH."[2]

The Truth even can be approached no otherwise than as God's law doth allow.[3] But the poets with all other artists have their custody of more than truth:

> Ye hold in trust the honor of mankind.
> Guard it! With yours 'tis closely intertwined.
> The charm of poetry we rightly deem
> Part of creation's well-appointed scheme.
> Let it roll on and melt into the sea
> Of a divinely blended harmony.
> When Truth is taunted by its proper age,
> Let her appeal to the poetic page
> And seek a refuge in the Muse's choir.
> Her real claims more readily inspire
> Respect, that they are shrouded o'er with grace.
> May she in song forever find a place,
> And on her dastard enemies shall rain
> Avenging paean in triumphal strain.
>
> Ye freeborn scions of a mother free,
> Press onward firmly with exalted eyes;
> Perfected beauty only may ye see,
> And lesser crowns ye need not stoop to prize!
> The sister missing in this present sphere
> Clasped to her mother's bosom ye shall find;
> What lofty souls as beautiful revere

[2] Bulwer-Lytton's version.

[3] The two ballads of Cassandra and the Diver each relate themselves to the same thought: To know what the Gods would conceal shall avail no man; to explore it instinctively tempting God—shall end in destruction.

Must noble be, and perfect of its kind.
Poised high above your life-appointed span,
Let your ecstatic pinions freely swell.
The dawning image in your mirror scan,
And the approaching century foretell.
By thousand paths and many devious ways
Through every varied turning ye shall glide
To welcome in the fulness of her days
Harmonious concord, your delight and guide.
(A.-F., p. 97.)

With so deep a conviction, then, of his vocation, and with so exalted a faith in the divine function thus allowed him, why should the poet refuse to be deprived (by his great ministry of delight) of what the common lot offers to mankind? Having friendship and work, knowing the tragic law of higher life through death, apprehending the oracle of necessary choice,—why should not the poet be of good cheer, even though Zeus seems to have divided out the earth already, reserving for him no equitable portion? His high-priesthood was, to be sure, foreseen:

"Part of creation's well-appointed scheme."

And so, it could not have been, after all, an oversight, albeit the ballad so has it, entitled "The Partition of the World":

"If thou to dwell in dreamland hast elected,"
Replied the God, "lay not the blame on me.
Where wast thou when the sharing was effected?"
"I was," the Poet said, "by thee.

Mine eye upon thy countenance was dwelling,
Thy heavenly harmony entranced mine ear;
Forgive the mind, thine influence compelling
Rendered oblivious of this sphere!"

"What can I do?" said Zeus. "For all is given;
The harvest, sport, the markets, all are seized.
But, an thou choose to live with me in heaven,
Come when thou willst, and I shall be well pleased."
(A.-F., p. 221.)

So much for the prophetic revelation Schiller had as poet: a double assurance of the worth of intelligent sacrifice of the less excellent for the more perfect; the hallowed privilege of special self-immolation when granted a place near to the gods, and an influence on the lives of his fellow men beyond the span of his own personal life.

III.

Now, in one single poem more than any other (and in this statement we are not ashamed to agree with much critical tradition) Schiller has expressed his philosophic counsel of flight from the actual world into the "kingdom of imagination". Therefore, we will here reprint Mr. Arnold-Forster's version of "The Ideal and Life", suggesting that the reader compare it, stanza by stanza, with the far less fluent one by Bowring. We are sincerely sorry that the publisher challenges comparison for his translator's art with Bayard Taylor's. That quoted anonymous eulogist, "among the highest authorities on German Literature in America," probably disdained to make a close study of any one of the didactic pieces where accuracy counts, line by line, original in hand, Bulwer-Lytton and Bowring to right and left of him. Only so could he have ascertained how, by this latest rendering, the crucial difficulties are glided over smoothly with an irritating

insouciance, letting the thought-sequence take care of itself as best it may. Bayard Taylor (so far as our reasonably close inspection through many years of his Faust may be a warrant for praise) never fails to grasp the most intimate sense of the text before him, and to wrestle manfully with English for equivalents. He is not always successful in his quest of the right word, and at times one must plead guilty for him to erratic obscurities and wrenched idioms. But, at least, Taylor does not smile in facile rimes his easy satisfaction at having avoided close issue with the subtle meanings of a pregnant phrase in his original. Let the reader study with care the tuneful poem made by Mr. Arnold-Forster out of Schiller's close metaphysic and sententious oracular eloquence.

THE IDEAL AND LIFE

(1)

Calm and transparent, as a mirror bright,
Flows Life along, with Zephyr wings bedight,
  Where dwell the blest in their Olympian state.
Moons may decay, and generations wane;
The roses of their godlike youth remain
  Immutable amid the general fate.
A timid choice is granted to mankind
  'Twixt sensual happiness and peace of soul.
Only upon celestial brows are joined
  The two, united under one control.

(2)

Wouldst thou on earth aspire a God to be,
And of the regions of the dead be free,
  See that thou pluck not of the garden's fruit!
Enough upon its sheen to feast thine eyes,
For all too soon some new desire will rise
  Possession's transient pleasures to confute.

Why, Styx himself, who ninefold trammels bound
About her, could not Ceres' daughter stay;
She grasped the apple, and thenceforth was bound
The will of dismal Orcus to obey.

(3)

The body leans upon those powers alone
Which influence Fate's darkest zone;
But, free from pressure of the passing storm,
The playfellow of Nature at its best,
Meanders in the precincts of the blest,
Divine 'mid deities—Ideal Form.
If thou wouldst rise upon celestial wings,
The little pains of earth thou must ignore;
Abandon count of mere terrestrial things,
And to the realms of the Ideal soar!

(4)

Young ever, and from earthly blemish free,
In light of perfect uniformity,
Here is man's image by the Gods designed.
As silent phantom forms which lived of yore
Gleam when they wander on the Stygian shore,
So these, within the heavenly frame enshrined,
Once had their place, before th' immortal fell
Down to the dark sarcophagus of earth.
If in the world the scales uncertain dwell,
'Tis there that victory proclaims its birth.

(5)

'Tis not your limbs from battle to excuse,
Nor in the weary courage to infuse,
That the victorious banner flutters here.
Implacable, although you fain would rest,
Life hurries you along upon its breast,
And Time involves you in its wild career.
And should the pinioned ardour of the soul
Shrink from the threatened limits to its flight,
Look down at last upon your well-earned goal
From Beauty's calm and enviable height.

(6)

If it be worth to govern and protect,
One champion 'gainst another to project,
Fortune and honor in the lists to gain,
There may audacity be wrecked on force,
And as the chariots thunder in their course,
They mingle helpless on the dusty plain.

He only can obtain the victor's meed
Whose courage presses to th' arena's prize.
Only the strong to conquer fate succeed,
The weakling in disparaged odour lies.

(7)

While rugged rocks the stream of life enclose,
In boiling leaps tumultuous it flows;
Yet how pacific wells that very stream
Through Beauty's shadowy pastures as it purls,
And on its silvered mirror-face unfurls
Now Hesperus, and now Aurora's beam.
Here mutual love a tender balm inspires,
And weaves a bond of sympathetic grace;
In peace repose inimical desires,
And the arch-foe no longer finds a place.

(8)

When Genius burns impatient, by his skill
Th' inanimate with being to instill—
His very self with matter to unite—
Then is the moment every nerve to strain,
That noble Thought victorious may reign
Over mere element's obstructive might.
To him alone who never seeks repose
The rippling fount can be revealed,
And to th' artistic chisel's mastering blows
Alone will adamantine marble yield.

(9)

But, penetrating even Beauty's sphere,
Toil must attend, and 'mid the dust adhere
To matter which with glory it invests.
Not from the mass laboriously run,
But light, as though, from merest essence sprung,
Th' enchanting image every eye arrests.
All doubts and difficulties pass away
As victory unfolds its certain plan,
And there remains no symptom to betray
Th' indigence of mortal man.

(10)

When, in mankind's ignoble trappings dressed,
Before the bar divine ye stand impressed,
And guilt approaches the immortal throne,
No wonder that thy vaunted merits pale
In face of Truth; that dubious actions quail
When the Ideal makes its power known:—

Perfection is for no created thing.
And over this impenetrable deep
No vessel plies, no kindly bridge may spring,
In it no anchor can its holding keep.

(11)

Be not alone by narrow Reason taught,
But freely rise to the domain of Thought,
So dark illusions soon will be outgrown,
Abysses will no obstacle present.
Thy spirit and the Deity's cement,
And God half way will meet thee from His throne.
The rigid law's unyielding fetters bind
Only the slave who treats them with disdain;
Against the dull resistance of mankind
The very majesty of God is vain!

(12)

Torn by the pangs to which mankind is heir,
Like some Laocoön, who, in despair,
Struggles against the horrid serpent brood,
No wonder man revolts, and that his cries
Ascend to the reverberating skies,
And bend the hearer to a melting mood!
Victorious echo, Nature's awful voice!
Let pallor blanch the too-exalted brow,
And your immortal element rejoice
Before a sacred sympathy to bow!

(13)

But in that light, exhilarating sphere
Where Beauty's form is focused sharp and clear,
The storm no longer howls amid the boles;
Th' emancipated spirit knows no pain,
Tears flow no longer, and uncurbed remain
The natural yearnings of impulsive souls.
Fair, as when Iris' many-tinted bow
Transforms the weeping cloud to sparkling dew,
So on the murky veil of sorrow glow
Consoling flashes of celestial blue.

(14)

Alcides once, obeying the behest
Of an unworthy master, went in quest
Of all the perils which on life attend;
Strangled the lion, laid the hydra stark,
Nor feared to enter Charon's dreadful bark,
While yet in life to liberate his friend.

And all the miseries of mankind which rack
The unforgiving Goddess loved to place
Upon her enemy's long-suffering back
Until completed was his earthly race.

(15)

Until the God, shedding his worldly guise,
Renounces man, and seeks the flaming skies,
Quaffing th' entrancing ether at its birth,
Rejoicing in his new-born power of flight,
Upward he mounts, and up, till lost to sight
Is every vision which recalls the earth.
His ears, transfigured, revel in the strains
Which from the portals of Olympus roll,
And with a just relief once more he drains
The heavenly nectar from a heavenly bowl.

(A.-F., pp. 224-228.)

Since this paper is written chiefly for such as have little or no German at their command, and considering the very great importance to the lover of poetry and moral science which all students claim for the piece under discussion, it seems only right to offer a quite untechnical elucidatory paraphrase, which he who scorns such aids may easily omit.

The Ideal and Life.

I. Because of the limits set us by our organism, we are constantly forced to a sore decision between alternatives, which are both in their way desirable.

II. Let us then resolutely elect the better, however dear it may cost us to forego the less excellent.

III. Yet man can even now (by creative thought) escape his impotence and insignificance

and dwell in a world not unlike that of Plato's eternal ideas: the world of philosophers, sages, poets and mystics.

IV. Borne thither, we are privileged to behold the Ideal Man, and, for our spiritual welfare, the Victory of our Cause.

V. Nor is this entrance into a "Kingdom of the Spirit" meant to relax our efforts on earth, but rather to renew our courage and increase our strength.

VI. In the practical world, whether in sport or in earnest, none can succeed but in proportion to strength, skill and courage; and it is well so, else should weakness, incompetency and cowardice prevail.

VII. Yet the strong, capable and brave stand often in the greatest need of rest; of realizing the stillness and sweetness that characterize the largest life.

VIII. Let no artist presume on his easier access to the world of the imagination; if he would glorify the ideal he beholds, he too must endure hardship.

IX. Should he, however, lose vision and confidence, he may behold his work, perfect already in divine pre-existence, and so be enabled to toil on for its partial realization here below.

X. [All men are in a true sense artists and poets (endeavoring to create a poem:—their life and character)] and awful indeed is for them the

discovery of the inevitable discrepancy between principle and performance.

XI. Yet a species of [Neo-Lutheran] salvation by faith not altogether unlike the Doctrine of the Theologia Germanica and the preaching of Tauler, can afford comfort and consolation; for by atonement with God man may within himself adore his God, and share in some degree His bliss.

XII. Notwithstanding, we are not God, and must feel the woes and iniquities of our fellowmen; so that at times we rebel, till our very desire to be at one with God will fail us.

XIII. Yet we learn in due time, that out of human sin and woe proceed the highest good, purity and bliss; and we permit suffering and anguish to be transfigured [as in hero and martyr] to a thing divine; [in which God claims His human share].

XIV. So at least the old Hellenic Myth would teach us; the divine man was persecuted only to challenge the God in him to fuller manifestation.

XV. Which, when it had fully taken place, reconciled mankind to his passion and their own.

Now lest this merely utilitarian prose account should not suffice, and the translation of Arnold-Forster appear too Swinburnian in its somnolent mellifluous drift nowhither, between silvery willows awave in twilight mist; a harder, less musical rendering is offered the patient reader, which has been attempted on purpose for his possible profit, although we fear quite doubtful delectation. Who-

ever enjoys the German has courteous leave to make merry at its infirmities, or to pass by on the other side. It "claims" nevertheless to be resolutely close to the original, even if not rarely it must entrust the associative values of a noun to epithets nowise in the text; and seek equivalents for Teutonic idioms that will not be Englished without too great violence to usage and the trained ear.

LIFE AND THE IDEAL

I

Forever crystal-fair and zephyr-soft
Life glideth calmly by, where throned aloft
The blesséd Gods on heights Olympian;
Moons wax and wane,—folk-kindreds come and go—
But still the roses of their youth do blow
Changeless 'mid wrack of worlds. Ah me, and man
Knows the choice merely, dubious and sad,
Betwixt a thrill of sense and peace of soul!
The brows of the high Gods alone are glad
Of the twain wedded to a joyous whole.

II

Would ye, O sons of men, already be
Like to the Gods in Death's dominion—free?
Then pluck not of his garden's luring fruit.
On the fair show of things delight your eye;
Possession yieldeth joys that straightway die,
Yea, slayeth sweet desire in swift pursuit.
Even Styx, Demeter's child with black folds nine
Of fathomless stagnant water, could not hold;
She grasped the apple and therefore must she pine,
Chained to the grisly law of Orcus cold.

III

Howbeit the powers, that weave our darkling fate,
Beyond the body cannot wreak their hate;
Free from all tyrannies of time and space,
Playmate of happy sprites, o'er fields of day,
Familiar of the Gods, divine as they,
Form moves enhaloed of immortal grace.

Would ye soar thither, wafted of her wings,
  Ev'n now? Forthwith, earth's fears beneath you hurled,
Breaking the clutch of narrow dismal things,
  Escape from life into the Ideal world!

IV

Young always yonder bideth, without flaw
Or blemish earthly—in radiance and awe
  Of perfect bloom—the form of Man divine;
As fared the shades by Stygian marges dumb
In quiet sheen through a fabled Elysium;
  Rather, as stood—the azure for his shrine—
The eternal Soul ere to the fleshly tomb
  She made descent out of her glorious place,
When tremble in life the battle's scales with doom,
There victory, smiling, greets thee face to face.[a]

V

Not craven limbs to rescue from the strife,
But to refresh the fainting with new life,
  Doth victory wave her fragrant garland thus!
Implacable, howe'er ye yearn for rest,
Life hurtleth you on her steep-billowy breast
  And swift time swirleth 'round uproarious,
But should your courage waver—her quivering wings
  Adroop for the dread sense of limits dire—
Look up unto the heights, where beauty brings
  Your spirits to their goal, and dare aspire!

VI

When war is waged for lordship or defense—
Champion eyes champion, grappling might immense
  With defter might—at fortune's call or fame's—
Bare courage copeth ill with armed force;
Likewise where chariots o'er the dust-choked course
  Shatter each other in th' heroic games;

[a] Dr. Paul Carus, to whom this version was submitted and some of whose suggestions were accepted, takes decided issue here as to the interpretation. The German use of the adjective without its noun renders a delightful ambiguity possible, which the translator is obliged to resolve, supplying the noun he supposes to have been understood. Hence natural differences of opinion. His emendation runs as follows:

> Life's phantoms thus by Stygian marges dumb
> In quiet sheen live in Elysium.
> Thus, too, stood she—the azure for her shrine—
> The Eternal Goddess ere to Pluto's tomb
> She made descent out of celestial light.
> Doubtful in life remains our battle's doom
> While victory here is always within sight.

Valor alone can wrest him prize and praise
That beckon from the goal attained; alone
The strong shall master fate, and all his days
The dastard weakling fail and fail and moan.

VII

Yet see, the river of life, tho' hurling fierce
Torrents of foam where crags close-hem and pierce
His stream, doth flow—smooth, gentle, sinuous—
Thro' visionary calms of Beauty's vale,
Glassing upon his silver edges pale
Aurora blithe, or twinkling Hesperus.
Dissolved in gracious mutual love, and bound
Together freely in bands of comeliness,
Here impulse hath and passion respite found;
And foes ban ire, sweet fellowship to bless.

VIII

When fashioning genius would a soul create
In what before was lifeless—fain to mate
Pure form with substance at his urgent will—
Bid manful diligence strain every nerve,
Bid courage vanquish matter, till it serve,
And the whole purpose of the Thought fulfill:
Only stern toil, and stubborn quest shall hear
The murmured runes from deep, hid wells of truth;
Only the chisel's valiant stroke lays bare
What lurks within marble block uncouth.

IX

But if to Beauty's realm thou penetrate,
Below thee tarrieth sloth and leaden weight
Amid the dust, and the heavy clod it sways.
Wrung with no aching toil from the crude mass
Behold, there,—sprung from nothing, come to pass
Even to herself—thy Vision beyond praise!
Quelled be thy struggles, all thy doubts allayed
In a serene content at mastery won;
For lo, no trace remains of what betrayed
A human frailty in the work begun!

X

Whenso in man's poor nakedness ye face
The majesty of law, your pride abase;
Guilt even to the holy One draws nigh.
Well may stout virtue quail before the rays
Of steadfast truth, and with averted gaze

Your deeds avoid perfection's searching eye.
For never mortal but his aim did miss.
No boat may ferry, and no bridge may bear
Over yon frightful sundering abyss;
Nor soundeth anchor its swallowing despair.[10]

XI

Take ye then sanctuary from imprisoning sense
In the far freedoms of high thought, and hence
Hath every fear-begotten phantom flown;
The gap 'twixt purpose and achievement fills:—
Yea, draw the Godhead close into your wills,
And he forsakes for you his cosmic throne.
None but the slave's mind feels a fettering sway,
Who scorneth of the law its chastening rod;
For lo, with man's resistance passed away
The awful sovereignty likewise of God.

XII

When the great anguish of the human race
Doth harrow you, and Laocoön's tortured face
Of dumb woe, choked in the enclasping snakes,
Ye front; 'tis just your manhood should rebel,
And unto heaven proclaim the griefs of hell
Until your heart for ruthful sorrow breaks.
'Tis well that Nature's dreadful voice prevail,
And youth grief-pallid weep with blinded eyes;
That pangs of death your deathless Self assail,
Whilst ye for fellow-feeling agonize.

XIII

But nevermore in yon sun-happy realm,
Where the pure Forms abide, shall overwhelm
The mind such turbid wash of human woe.
Not here may pain the soul with grief transpierce,
Nor blighting tears be shed. The anguish fierce
Now lives but in the spirit's battle glow;
Lovely, as hover shimmering rainbow hues
Over the thunderous rack with sprightly glee;
So thro' cloud-veils of moody gloom transfuse
Bright skies of cheer, and still felicity!

[10] The metaphor is in the last line resolved by the translator into its moral consolation.

"Nor ever anchor soundeth bottom there"

is a more literal rendering. So in the next stanza (line 4) "twixt purpose and achievement" are supplied to make the sense clearer—at the cost no doubt of some mysterious shudders.

XIV

This lore the ancient myth to all made plain:—
How Zeus of yore did Herakles constrain
To serve the coward and bear his rule unjust;
Humbled he went life's footsore ways, and fought
Unceasing; lion and hydra slew, and wrought
With his own hands huge labors; yea, and thrust
His body quick in Charon's doleful bark
To loose dear friends. Dire plagues and burdens great
Hera devised, and grievous care and cark—
But ev'r his fortitude outsped her hate:

XV

Until his course was run; until in fire
Stripping the earthly raiment on the pyre
The God breathed freely Empyréan airs;
Blithe-hearted at his new-got power of flight,
Upward he soared from joyful height to height,
And down as an ill dream sank earth's dull cares.
Olympian harmonies the Man enfold,
Transfigured in the shining hall of Zeus.
With smile and blush the Goddess, see, doth hold
To his lips at last the cup of heavenly bliss.[11]

The poem thus concludes with a noble picture of Herakles (not forgetful, doubtless, of the significant fact that he is, in the Enchiridion, the mythological type which Christian editors of that Stoic tract replaced by the name of Jesus). We are shown how that human son of Zeus fought his way with stubborn courage against the persecution of the Queen of Heaven, until whatever in him was earthly perished on the sacred pyre; whereupon the goddess (perchance Hera herself taking Hebe's room) offered him the cup brimming with the nectar of the gods.

[11] Should the rhyme "Zeus"—"bliss" give offence, we offer an alternate rendering:

Olympian harmony the Man enfolds
In th' hall of Zeus transfigured; ay, and I see
To his lips with smile and blush the Goddess holds
Her nectar cup of immortality!

So we conclude, in our case also, if heaven oppose, it is but a challenge, a veiled invitation to join the immortals themselves. Let Herakles encourage the victim of outrageous fate, to attain his destiny. And even now—whatever may beyond death await him—there is instantaneous admission to an Olympian peace—the kingdom of imagination, the "realm of pure form" where he may dwell as free man,—aye, as king,—while enduring, perchance, servitude in the flesh and ignominious moral defeat.

What the prosaic summation of this remarkable poem's doctrines may be, each competent reader can discern now for himself. For the sake, however, of his integrity of thought, let us protest in advance against any amiable overhaste, because of Schiller's noble attitude, to denominate him a Christian poet; unless, as the loose manner of some is, any moral worth and spiritual exaltation shall be accorded that dubiously honest courtesy by our liberal Christendom.

The most Schiller has to say of immortality is—that we seem born for something better:

> It is no vain, deluding thought
> Which from disordered fancy springs;
> By hope our hearts are plainly taught
> That we are born for better things.
> That inward voice, if we believe,
> The hoping soul will not deceive.
>
> (Hope, A.-F., p. 265.)

There, too, in the fourteenth stanza of the poem "Resignation," we are distinctly told that no dead has ever returned to bear witness (cf. st. 10, l. 8,

"Ideal and Life"): exactly the opposite of what is claimed by the Christian Scriptures. And, be it noted, the "better things that we are born to" clearly signifies a Stoic elevation here and now by force of soul above the chaos of fate, from which we are at liberty to select what is akin to our destiny and profits and ennobles our living spirit.

This is a doctrine only meet for such as be very valiant: prepared for abstinences, inured to disciplines, resolved, if need were, to self-immolation; who dare to become companions in deed and truth of Herakles, passing with him from their sacrificial labors into the heaven of triumphant thought, upborne by the very flames they kindled of the world's consuming fire*

IV.

The "Walk" gives an account, in chatty hexameters, of the charm exercised on the poet by nature; then we see the rise of the city, the development of human solidarity, the successive appearance of industry, commerce, art and science, followed by the terrible avatar of Liberty, which, alas! seems to imply demoralization. Then we feel the dissolution of human society is threatened, and Schiller takes refuge again in nature, which becomes a sacrament of chaste self-restraint

*Cf. Symbolism of Elijah's chariot, and the bolt of Zeus upbearing Œdipus in Sophocles' Œdipus Coloneus.

and restores man to primitive individual innocence and social health.

Much more has been made of this poem than we think, in spite of the beautiful close, is its real desert. So the "Song of the Bell" also appears to have been much overrated as philosophical poetry. Far more significant seem to us the series "Nenia," "The Child at Play," "The Sexes," "The Dance," "Fortune," "Genius" and "The Philosophical Egoist," of which, as poetry, we should prefer the three that seem to continue each other's thought: "The Dance," "Fortune" and "Genius". "Nenia" bids us think it no poor fate to be an elegy in the mouth of love; "The Child at Play" suggests how the child often admonishes stern duty for her lack of joy and vital courage; "The Sexes" set forth the organic mystery of twofold procreation as a symbol leading to a comprehension of divine love;* "The Dance" illustrates in most melodious verse that perfect repose which is the ordered motion of beautiful form, the explanation of which mystery is the gracious miracle involved in the dominion of "Measure", which dominion man, alas! in his play will acknowledge, and yet perversely disown, —nay, even resist,—in his serious avocations. Singularly beautiful is the noble plea in "Fortune" that we recognize the favorites of the gods without envy,—accepting them as partial revelations of the divine mind and heart. "Genius"

*Woman's Worth, A. F., p. 262.

celebrates that fortunate man whose very whim is wisdom, whose irresponsible play turns out to be supreme achievement, for whom patient science and our proud moral disciplines have no contribution. Here, in the close of the poem, do we come nearest to that chief Christian conception of a "Son of God"—the divine Child, perfect restorer of the race to a more than Paradisaic glory. "The Philosophic Egoist" serves as epilogue to our series, showing that nature, by turn both mother and child, cannot possibly yield her inmost secret to that philosopher who will grant no rational value or loveliness to unselfish impulses.

This remarkable sequence of poems in unrhymed elegiacs offers little difficulty to the reader who does not let himself be lulled into unintelligence by the melody of rhythm. They do not (except toward the close of "Genius" and now and then in "Fortune", and by gradual ascent throughout to the end of "The Dance") rise to any very lofty mood of poetic fury. For that very reason, perchance, they will serve as grateful comment on the more oracular lyrics in which the white heat of divine passion has fused into musical phrase the hard definiteness of Schiller's thought. There remain two more pieces that must be painstakingly studied by any who would form a correct view of Schiller's position, namely, the "Words of Faith" and the "Words of Error," which we reproduce here:

THE WORDS OF FAITH

1.

Three words of significant import I name,
  And the lips to each other impart;
From no indiscriminate sources they came,
  But their origin have in the heart;
And unless these words form part of his creed,
Man is a pitiful creature, indeed.

2.

Man was created, and man is free,
  No matter if born in chains;
Let the cry of the rabble pass over thee,
  And the howl of extravagant swains!
Of no free man stand thou in fear,
Nor of slave who has conquered a free career.

3.

And Virtue is more than an echoing call,
  For it serves man day by day;
And, though he may blunder and stumble and fall,
  He can aim at the virtuous way;
And what from the wiseacre oft is concealed
Is as oft to the soul of the simple revealed.

4.

And a God there is, whose will compels
The wavering mind of man;
And thought of the loftier order swells
  Beyond time's wildest ken.
Though the world in eternal vicissitude roll,
There is ever repose for the peaceable soul.

5.

Preserve these three great words that I name,
  One lip to another impart;
Though not from extraneous sources they came,
  But their origin have in the heart.
So long as these words form part of his creed,
Man is a creature of worth, indeed.

THE WORDS OF ERROR

1.

Three words of significant meaning there are
  In the mouths of the wisest and best,
Yet vainly they echo, like tones from afar,
  And yield no assistance or rest.
Man forfeits the fruits he could lightly attain
If after impalpable shadows he strain.

2.

So long as he pictures a glorious age,
  Rejoicing in honor and right—
Those gifts will assuredly combat engage
  With a foe who forever will fight.
Thou must at him in air, for a contact with earth
Supplies to his force a regenerate birth.

3.

So long as he thinks that success will attend
  On nobility's conduct and aims—
He will find that she looks upon wrong as a friend,
  That the world what is worthy disclaims.
A wanderer he, and his duty to roam,
To discover elsewhere an immutable home.

4.

So long as he dreams that the reason of man
Can with absolute verities close—
He will find an abyss which no mortal can span;
  We can but assume and suppose.
In a word, it is true, thou canst prison the mind,
But it surges away on the wings of the wind.

5.

Then hasten thy soul from illusions to wean,
  And a higher religion endue!
What the ear never heard, and the eye has not seen,
  Remains what is lovely and true!
It is not abroad, as the foolish contends;
'Tis within, and upon thine own ardor depends.

The "Words of Faith" affirm that: freedom of the quick mind, unwearied struggling for the ... ne in the simple spirit of the little child, and

to hold steadfast above him ever as "truly existent" the "highest thought" he can think; these are the fiats of the sane and saving faith. Having firm hold of such faith, one will be able surely to abstain from gross joy, and rest content in the stillness above the tumult of desire. The "Words of Folly" (rather than Error) are the supposition of a bygone or future golden age; of luck apportioned providentially in this (or any other) world according to desert (poetic justice, so called); and last (if not least) the arrogant assumption that any human theory will at any time compass the exactitude of a theometry (to quote Rossetti's clever coinage in "Soothsay"); for only the unseen and the unheard is the lovely and the true.

> "It is not without, for the fool seeks *it* there;
> Within thee it flourishes, constant and fair." *

Now, then, the remainder of the lyric poems are, for our purposes, relatively negligible. Except the following two epigrams from the "Votive Tablets" they are unnecessary for a clear perspective. These we will quote:

> All may share thy thoughts: thine own is only thy feeling.
> Wouldst thou own him, feel, do not imagine, thy God.
> (A.-F., p. 310.)

Otherwise rendered, for greater faithfulness' sake:

> What thou thinkest is common to all; thine own is thy feeling.
> Wouldst thou make him thy own—feel then the God thou hast thought.

*Bowring's version of the closing couplet of "Words of Error."

GOETHE AS POET-PROPHET.*

After Matthew Arnold, who will record his private opinions and feelings unwarily on so monopolized a topic as Translation? Yet an ordinary lover of literature will be pardoned for having his fling at the long-eared, grey-felled, surefooted word-for-worders? Browning, somewhat sensitive and not without reason, took keen delight in quoting a classical criticism of the criminal Æschylean obscurity? But as a schoolboy, having patiently employed dear old Robert's transyllabification as a crib, methinks it were not amiss to make the punishment fit the crime, if King Minos should doom Æschylus for so grievous a sin of obscurity, by way of all-sufficient atonement, to use his own "Agamemnon" once only as a crib to Robert Browning's!

And now Goethe—quite generally admitted to be fourth among the immortals—must be Englished, and this German God of poetry is not always instantly transpicuous.

Thank heaven, so far no Browning has offered himself for the adventure. But our own Bayard Taylor—traveler and pleasant singer—for all his American optimism deeming it possible that Eng-

*Cf. Poetry and Life; a Reading List. Univ. of Chi. Press, '06.

lish should follow foot by foot the metaphysical postures and verbal contortions of New High German, for all his eager ingenuity and fine craftsman's mastery of diction and rhythm—how has our brave Bayard fared in the fray?

Remembering my trials as devoted initiator into the Faustian mysteries, I dare to put a leading question:—would the student (of little German usually, and perhaps less English) make exalted sense at critical spots out of the scholarly version of our faithful verse-for-verser and foot-for-footer, did not the aforesaid student have at his elbow that gay scapegrace of a paraphrast, Dr. John Anster, who skips irresponsibly from dizzy height to height, and that spinsterly correct Miss Swanwick reared to breathe the common air on the homelier sea-level of well-bred discourse?

How difficult the task of rendering Goethe's easy yet tense, precise yet suggestive, idiomatic yet elegant verse into English that shall have the poetic cadence and verbal association, together with the accurate sense and equivalent sentiment! Who, more cheerfully ready to affirm this than one who has himself attempted the undertaking?

Without further apologies, therefore, let the remainder of our space be occupied by a few hazarded translations which will, taken together and in their order, provide a survey of the world and man and God from Goethe's own chosen point of view.

As no lines he ever penned have impressed the

world more than the last two of "Faust," nor caused more controversy, we shall assume that they meant more than meets the ear. For why in the name of sense or justice should the "woman soul" be credited with so much, and equally notable *Ewig Männliche,* as Nietzsche mischievously puts it, be so cruelly bereft of honor due? Since, however, *Das Ewig Weibliche* has actually served to test the poetic soul of the man; he betraying his own deepest self in his manner of envisaging that portentous miracle—the "eternal feminine" —we shall do well to quote, in full, Goethe's "Wanderer" with "The Wayfarer" for caption. Indeed the poem is his Madonna. From among the ruins of a glorious past, babe at breast, she appears to rest and refresh him, full of grace, with her simple girlish naturalness; and to offer him unasked the bread of life: faith, that is to say, in the external fitness of nature's inhuman ways of dealing with her noblest product—man.

DER WANDERER

The Wayfarer

Wayfarer—
Hail, and God bless thee,
Young mother, and the little one,
The son at thy breast!
Let me drop at the rock-wall here
In the elm tree's shadow
My burden down,
And rest me beside thee.

Young Mother—
What craft can drive thee
Thro' the heat of the day thus
Up the dusty path hither?
Bearest wares from the town
Through the country-side?

Thou smilest, stranger,
At this my question?

Wayfarer—
No wares from the town have I brought.
Cool now grows the evening.
Show me to the well-spring
Whereat thou drinkest,
Gracious new-wed wife!

Young Mother—
This way, up the rock-path.
Go before me! It leadeth
Through the shrubberies thick
Unto the well-spring
Whereof I drink.

Wayfarer—
Tokens of ordering human hands
Betwixt the bushes appear.
These stones be not of thy building,
Prodigal-handed Nature!

Young Mother—
Up further, and on!

Wayfarer—
Lo, covered with moss, an architrave!
I know thee, fashioning mind
Again,—thy seal in the hewn rock deep-set.

Young Mother—
Press onward, stranger!

Wayfarer—
Inscriptions whereon I trample,
Alas, illegible!
Away are ye flown,
Deep graven words,—
Ye that to thousand generations
Should your master's worship show.

Young Mother—
Starest thou, wondering
At this stone, stranger?
Farther up about my cot
Full many stones lie.

Wayfarer—
Yonder?

Young Mother—
Close at thy left
Up thro' the thick bushes,—
Here!

Wayfarer—
Ye muses and graces!

Young Mother—
This is my cottage.

Wayfarer—
Ruins of a temple!

Young Mother—
Down the slope this way
Up-welleth the spring
Whereof I drink.

Wayfarer—
Aglow still hoverest thou
Over thy grave-mound,
Genius; albeit on thee
Hath crashed and crumbled
Thy masterwork,
Undying spirit!

Young Mother—
Stay, the while I fetch the cup
That thou mayest drink.

Wayfarer—
Ivy hath clothed about
Thy godlike structure tall.
How ye yearn upward
Out of the wreckage,
Ye pillars twain . . . .
And thou, too, lonesome sister!
How ye together,
Mournful moss on your hallowed heads,
In grief majestical look down,
Beholding the prostrate pillars
At your feet broken,
Your kith and kin!
Of the tangled bramble-bushes shadowed,
Rubbish and earth half hide them;
And the gaunt grass stalks over them!
Dost thou thus scorn, O Nature,
Thy noblest creature's noblest work?
Shatterest thou so
Thy holy of holies, to plant there
The dock and the darnel?

Young Mother—
How he sleeps, my baby boy!
Wilt rest thee, stranger,
In our cottage?
Or wouldst rather
Here in the open tarry?
Cool it is. Take thou the boy
The while I fetch thee water.
Sleep, my darling, sleep!

Wayfarer—
Sweet is thy rest!
On heavenly seas of health
Afloat, tranquil he breathes!
Thou, born among the remnants
Of a holy long-gone past,
May its spirit breathe on thee!
For whom it halloweth, he,
As the gods in self-knowledge, shall thrill
With the gladness of day after day.
Unfold, thou swelling bud!
Loveliest gem adorning
White-shimmery spring,
Outshine thy fellows;
Then may the full fruit rise
Out of thy bosom
And ripen to sunward!

Young Mother—
God bless him! Still he sleepeth?
Naught have I more than homely bread
To offer thee, with the cool spring-water.

Wayfarer—
My heartfelt thanks.
How all about doth put forth bloom and leaf!
What verdure!

Young Mother—
Soon from the field
My husband home
Will come. O, stay, friend, stay,
And share with us the evening meal.

Wayfarer—
And here—ye dwell?

Young Mother—
Yonder among the toppled walls
My father lived to build the cottage
Of tiles and of the ruin's stones.

Here—do we dwell.
To a husband he gave me, and breathed
His last soon in our arms . . .
Hast slept thy fill, sweetheart?
How merry, see, and fond of play!
Wee rogue!

Wayfarer—
Nature, forever budding, each
Hast fashioned to the joy of life,
Purveying as mother true
To every child a home for heritage.
High buildeth the swallow
Under the eaves, unwitting
What chiselled grace she bedaubs;—
About the golden bough her brood's
Winter abode, the canker worm
Spinneth; and thou, 'mid ruins august
Of the long-gone past, O man,
For thy bare needs
Buildest thy patch-work cot;—
And hast over graves—thy joy!
Farewell, O happy wife.

Young Mother—
Thou wilt not tarry?

Wayfarer—
God keep you twain
And bless your boy.

Young Mother—
God speed thee.

Wayfarer—
Whither o'er yonder hill
Will the path take me?

Young Mother—
To Cuma.

Wayfarer—
And how far thither?

Young Mother—
Three miles or more.

Wayfarer—
Farewell.
Oh, lead my steps,
Nature,—the stranger's

Wayfaring foot,
Which o'er the graves
Of a hallowed long-gone age
Wendeth care free,—
To a place of safety
From north winds sheltered,
By a poplar copse
From the noon-sun screened;—
And, when homeward I turn
At eventide
To my hut in the last ray golden—
May such a wife there bid me welcome,
Our infant son in her arms!

We have now seen (and we trust with Goethe's "eye serene") "the very pulse of the machine" and thereby known it to be spirit and not as Wordsworth maladroitly for rhyme's sake puts it —mechanism. Therefore, like Wordsworth's more fortunate highland girl, she haunts us ever —and becomes unwittingly symbol and worship.

From *Die Nektar Tropfen,* the first portion of *Der Deutsche Parnass* and his great *Zueignung* (for which let the English reader eke out his Bowring to his heart's content—or otherwise) we can gather how noble a vocation and grace of God art seems to our Olympian.

Art—that noblest gift of all
* * * * * *
Words as poet's arms are made,—
When the god will be obeyed,
Follow fast his darts erelong
* * * * * *
That blest one will be safe from every ill,
Who takes this gift with soul of purity:
The veil of minstrelsy from truth's own hand.

But right here let us note how it is the Poetry not of irresponsible fiction, but of insight, intelligent memory and relevant fancy which he would

give us; and that he would have this poetry rationally employed to supplement the natural goods of life.

Come, then, my friends, and whensoe'er ye find
Upon your way increase life's heavy load;
If by fresh-wakened blessings flowers are twined
Around your path, and golden fruits bestowed,
We'll seek the coming day with joyous mind!

For though he unflinchingly fronts the evil, no pessimist is Goethe. Old, solitary—but for his daughter-in-law Ottilie and her offspring—he "loved" still, at fourscore, "the sweet habit of living and doing things" and declared that life was "like the Sybilline books—the fewer the leaves left, the more precious."

His optimism, however, is not due to discerning goods that escape the pessimist's view, but to his own deliberate and successful contribution of mind and heart unto that whole of which he is a creative part. The world and fate are but half human. It is man should harmonize them for himself. And this humanizing of the world and fate by man is Art.

Now, artist though he is, owing no fealty to moral law as pious tradition or social convention, Goethe comes nevertheless to know it and honor it as inherent in the Artist's work, and vital to the Artist's noblest manhood.

NATUR UND KUNST

Art and Nature

Nature and Art still shun each other's sight,
Yet mate as fellows, ere one wotteth well.
My stubborn mood hath long since left me quite;
So, which most draweth me I scarce may tell.

There needs must be a strait and true endeavor:
But, the full dole once paid—of life we owe,
Bound mind and will as thralls of Art forever,
Fiercely at heart as erst may Nature glow!

Like token marketh every high emprise.
All spirits undisciplined strove in vain to stand
Where heights of pure perfection reach the skies.
Who great things would, shall hold his soul in hand.

Only self-mastered may man master be,
And law fulfilled, alone can speak us free!

Artist, with this resolute devotion, Goethe must go on to discover the law of life from a more general survey than his own individual life and lot permit. Hence, for his times most comprehensive and audacious scientific studies, which made of him the first Poet of Evolution, knowing in himself whereof he spake and sang. *Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen* and *Die Metamorphose der Thiere* set forth his notions of species, and their relation, and the wider law underlying their distinctness and affinity. The first of these didactic pieces was translated by Bowring and so we will extract from the second the broad principle Goethe discerned.

Nevertheless within, the might of the worthier creatures
Findeth itself close girt by a round of living formation;
Borders no God may enlarge, which Nature revereth:
For, such limits alone make possible any perfection!
* * * * * *
May this noble conception of might and restraint and of self-will
And law, and of freedom and bounds, and of order in motion,
Lack and advantage,—rejoice thee; for hearken, the holy
Muse doth teach it thee thus with gentle insistence.
Higher conception no ethical thinker attaineth;
None the man of affairs, at his craft no fashioning artist.
Rulers thence, worthy of rule, the pleasure draw of their sceptre!

Highest Creation of Nature, rejoice that thou feelest thee able
Thinking, her loftiest thought to o'ertake, whereto in creating
She herself upsoared; there plant thee, and thence let thy glances
Backward sweep, make proof, and compare, and take from the Muse's
Mouth (that thou see, nor be drunken,) this full truth, certain and gracious!

In such wise, then, Goethe, the artist and scientist, became the moralist—the attainment of one's own completest life and lot requiring impartially of every aspirant for perfection much more than the external law had required for the sake of others (less, however, the sense of humiliated acceptance of coercion from without)—since he discovered the law himself and on his own behalf, as innate in the actual constitution and vital necessity and his very being.

III.

So little was Goethe inclined to waste creative energy in criticism that the religious protest of his soul, though ethically vigorous, got scanty expression. He began a dramatic poem "Prometheus"—which for some reason or other remained a fragment. Perhaps the torso was in this case more satisfying than the completed statue promised to be. He was too cultivated and self-sceptical to mistake the bow of Iris and Noah's post-diluvian discovery for a substantial modern Bifrost over which across the sundering gap he might lead his people, even such as they were, into a new Walhalla. He was, by a rational habit

of soul, and a wide acquaintance with the philosophic and poetic past, wholly unable to mount like Shelley, and whirl us along with him in a cloud of phrase and rhythm through nebulous luminosity into the "intense inane" and then mistake the mystic individual rapture, however infectious, for an effective social salvation! So, Prometheus, the rebel, was the utmost the theme could yield to Goethe.

What does man owe to God—God as a being and consciousness apart from man's own? Nothing. That external non-human God—if, indeed, he be at all—is strangely ineffective and non-committal. If that God then be, in very truth, he is ever like man, fashioned by omnipotent time and by eternal fate—subject to the same universal laws. So let man thank not that unhelpful hypothetical Being—but himself—his virtue, his natural strength, his imagination, reason and will! Finely is this human protest uttered (and we should be tempted to say finally) in Goethe's "Prometheus." Nor does Bowring's translation call seriously for much amendment. If, however, "God" be taken as the collective expression for "the gods"—the natural powers without and within man—they do not have any claim on man's love. Let him fear them—use them and never cease to consider their devious ways. The chorus put in the mouths of the Parcæ at the end of the fourth act of Iphigenia, for which Miss Swanwick's translation is clearly the best extant, sets

forth magnificently their utter inhumanity. If ethics be theirs, then is the principle of their ethics for man totally undiscoverable and unworthy of respect:—

> Whom they have exalted
> Let him fear them most.

God as a transcendental omnipotent providential Father, and God as a gracious divine fellowship of kindly disposed patrons, are bravely denied then to exist; and what *is* in their stead to the eye critically schooled cannot have any just right to man's veneration and grateful self-subjection.

> Ah, ye Gods, ye mighty Gods
> In the wide heaven over us,
> Would ye grant us here on earth
> Stalwart mind and cheerful heart,
> Gladly would we leave to you,
> O, ye good, your heaven above!

And this little ironical piece he entitles *Menschengefühl*—a human feeling (perhaps all too human, in Nietzsche's phrase). For, though Goethe would not be called an atheist even with regard to these above-mentioned "notions of God," he is quite content to remain agnostic. What have such Gods to do with us? And if so, then what have we to do with them?

Now, in religious affirmation, Goethe was more joyously at home by temperament, and therefore more convincingly eloquent. To such as will assume for the nonce his unconcern with extra-human and extra-mundane deities, these chaunts breathe the very life of piety and the fervor of idealism. They are poetry, not metaphysical defi-

nition; elation of spirit, not dogma. But to render them more easily comprehended, and therefore perhaps more heartily acceptable in their noble self-restraint and rational enthusiasm, it may be well to emphasize the arbitrary sequence in which we here produce them.

Man's consciousness and character appearing to him and for him, and disappearing in due time with equal mysteriousness; the mystery also for him in the particular course allowed them by the world in which they find themselves; these are sung

> O life of Man's soul
> How like unto water!
> O weird of Man's life
> How like unto wind.

Then we are asked to meditate on the limitations of man's power of body and mind. Only through successive generations does man ever appear to escape them. But the generations are "a chain link in link" and cannot flee from their own law of being and order. They repeat rather the limitations of the "petty round" than pass forth in free spiral or parabola.

But what are in fact these Gods men have ever yearned to know and dwell with in heaven? They are ideals man must realize on earth. Their only source is man's groping endeavor. They are projections outward of inner aspirations. If they ever are to be actual reality, we shall have to bring them into being by act; and then we may by metathesis turn our final end into a cause, and

call ourselves the children of God![1] Strictly spoken—the Gods shall yet be children of man. Albeit, to those unknown, unreckonable potencies of the Universe let us pay the worship due—for that, indeed, is their only human use:—to aid man to adore and yearn. They are helps to the exercise of man's highest and noblest powers, or they are nothing to him.

Yet there be Gods—in the sense of functions, faculties and attributes within—whom it behooves us to cultivate, at all events to grant full freedom of play unto greater achievements. And of these mental and sentimental powers Goethe cherishes most Phantasy and Hope—for they set man in human pre-eminence above the animal.

To them, "the moment's cramped mindless existence." To man—prospect and retrospect; free of "mere want and need," to make-believe and to enjoy; to find mastery and courage and refreshment in the spirit. And beware lest Wisdom wax overbearing, and cramp Phantasy with petty rules of prudence; or lest in our devotion to Phantasy we disparage the vital Hope through which Phantasy leads on to her own vindication in "high enterprise," and obtains consolation, however often it may fail of deserved fruition in a world that ignores us, furthering or thwarting blindly our intent.

After so much more or less superfluous com-

[1]The "Word" is *die That;* for the deed alone includes idea, energy and will, and through it only is mind truly made manifest.

ment, let the noble poems themselves address the reader in the best version we were able to make for him, hoping that he, too, will accept their challenge and do better if he can!

GESANG DER GEISTER UEBER DEN WASSERN

Chant of the Spirits Over the Waters

The Soul of Man
Is like unto Water:
From heaven it falleth,
To heaven ariseth,
And thence to earthward
In endless round
Again returneth!

When from sheer crag quick-gusheth
The flashing stream,
It breaketh in shimmer
And glister, and flitteth
To the smooth sheen rocks
Below; whence softly
Updrawn, as a mist-veil
Forthfluttereth, its mysteries
Flit lisping and whispering
Adown the still deep!

If rough boulders upfling them
Its onrush to stem,
Lo, it frotheth and roareth
From ledge to ledge weltering
To the bottomless pit;
Thro' level green valleys
It dallyeth wistfully—
And the stars do number
In wide pools unwrinkled
Their twinkling array.

The wind is the lusty
Lover of waters,
Who the foamcrested billows
Upstirreth and mingleth.

O, Life of Man's soul,
How like unto water!
O, Weird of man's life,
How like unto wind!

DIE GRENZEN DER MENSCHHEIT

Human Limitations

When far scattereth the Ancient
Of days and most holy
Allfather, freehanded
From billowing cloudrack,
The seeds over earth
Of beneficent lightning—
I kiss me his vesture's
Uttermost border,
The little child's reverent
Fear in my heart.

For let not the mightiest
Meet him as fellow
With beings divine.
Aloft doth man hurl him
With proud front to smite
The heavens—and lo, helpless
His foot findeth nowhere
Safe stead, while the welkin
And wind with him sport.

Or, with stout thew astrain
If he rear him up, stalwart,
On the fast-founded earth
Everlasting,—behold,
Tho' haughty of stature,
Shall to skyward his reach be
With the gnarled oak's likened,
Or the clambering vine's?

What sundereth mankind
From the Gods thus forever?
Innumerous the waves fare
On and on following—
A flow inexhaustible
Before them; while us—
One surge lifteth and swalloweth,
That we sink into nought.

A petty round close
Engirdeth our life;
And the frequent generations
Outstretch link in link
The chain never ending
Of human existence.

DAS GÖTTLICHE

The Divine

High-hearted be Man,
Kindly and good.
Seeing thereby only
Preferred is he
Before all beings
To mortals known.

Hail the loftier Unknown
Beings whom in awe
We forefeel! Let man be
After their likeness;
In them his ensample
Teach trust and belief!

For, without feeling
Is Nature; on wicked
And good forthshineth
The sun; ay, the mean
Alike and the worthiest
Behold the still beauty
Of moon and of stars.

Whirlwind and flood,
Thunder and hail-storm,
Roar on their way,
And, hurtling past them,
Whelm in destruction
All in their turn.

Even so, blindly gropeth
Luck 'mid the many;
Now catching the curls
Of the guileless youngling,
And now the bald pate
Of the hoary in guilt.

Girded of laws
Everduring, adamantine,
Vast,—all, all
Must draw to its close
Their round of existence.

Man only can bring
To pass the impossible;—
'Tis he who discerneth,
Who deemeth and doometh;
And the vanishing moment
By his grace may endure.

To man only is granted
Boon for the worthy,
Bane for the wicked;
He healeth, he saveth;
The astray and wide-strown
He atoneth in use.

And immortals we worship
As tho' human they were;
Wrought in the vast,
What in narrower room
The worthiest doeth,
Or fain would do.

Be the high-hearted man, then,
Both kindly and good!
Fashioning, unwearied,
The Useful, the Right;
In truth so foreshadowing
You beings we divine.

MEINE GÖTTIN

My Goddess

To which of the deathless
Shall the highest praise be?
I contend not with any,
Yet proffer my worship
To the quick-varying
Ever-young and light-hearted
Wondrous daughter
Of Zeus, his darling
Child—Phantasy!

For unto her freely
Made he allotment
Of all moods and whimsies,
Else sacredly warded
For his Godhead alone;
And greatly he taketh
Delight in the anticks
Of his wayward wanton:—

Whether her listeth
With crown of red rose-buds
And white lily-sceptre
To trip it thro' valleys
Abloom, and queen it
O'er summery song-birds

And butterflies, sipping
The sweet dew, bee-like,
From the heart of the flowers;

Or whether her listeth,
With loose locks streaming
And look melancholy,
In the winds to fling her
Over beetling crags;
Or with hues myriad-glinting
As the morn and the even,—
With ever new aspect
As the smiles of the morn,
To reveal her to mortals.

Wherefore laud and thank
Let us proffer the Ancient
Of Days, high-exalted,
The Father, who so lovely
Never-fading a consort
Hath accorded us, perishing
Children of men!

For unto us only
Hath he lovingly plighted her
With the troth-ring of heaven,—
And straitly charged her
In good days and evil
As true-hearted helpmeet
Never to forsake us.

All other poor kindreds—
Offspring of Earth
Living Mother of lives,—
Roam, raven and feed,
In the gross joys sordid,
And the dull brutish anguish
Of the moment's cramped
Mindless existence;—
Low bowed by the yoke
Of want and of need!

Howbeit unto us (O
Joy!), he hath granted
His subtlest, much-fondled
And daintiest daughter.
Come, graciously meet her
As best beloved;
Intreat her to wield
The sway of our household.

And beware lest step-dame
Wisdom unwittingly
Ruffle her sensitive,
Tender child's spirit.

Albeit, fellowship
Lief, with her elder,
Soberer sister
Long have I cherished;

O may she not leave me
Ere the last ray of life;
She, to high emprise urger,
Soul-consoler—kind Hope!

IV.

And now, after these odes which any reader of poetry must enjoy, whatever his convictions, we would present for his consideration three pieces of a wholly different order. In sixteen stanzas compact, precise, suggestive—that puzzle, provoke, yet allure to repeated trials of strength with their Delphic obscurity—Goethe expresses his maturest views of man, the world and God.

They were none of them translated by Sir Edgar Alfred Bowring, C. B., doubtless "because" in his opinion "the few other pieces included by Goethe under the title of Religion and the World are polemical and devoid of interest to the English reader!" If Bowring has judged rightly, the American reader we fancy is not wholly like his cousin! It was doubtless, however, after sore wrestlings with these pieces that Sir Edgar at break of day discovered they were only of controversial and local interest! For difficult as they in the original, they become even more so in

any version that endeavors to preserve poetic dignity. Too easily would the translator give us arid abstracts without the hypnotic spell-power and the oracular manifoldness of meaning that doth "tease us out of thought" and constitutes orphic poetry. We should have rhymed metaphysics devoid of interest for any except some mind in complete metaphysical agreement with the author. Our task was undertaken with fear and trembling and executed with perspiring diligence and frenetic rapture. Had there not been for us a personal motive, it is to be feared the reader would not now have his opportunity to exult over our failure. But there was one eager student of Goethe that knows no German, and for whom the work had to be done as well or ill as the Muses and Minerva would permit.

So without effort at self-vindication, we shall proceed to give these sixteen stanzas, eleven prefaced each in turn by prose comment which, if he resent as an impertinence, the offended reader will kindly cross out with editorial blue pencil, and read and re-read the translations all the oftener—with the originals if he can, and is so minded—that he may be tempted to supersede these efforts, doubtless more laudable for their good intent than for the eventual excellence.

Yet, let the reader once more impress on himself, be he Christian Dogmatist, or Atheistic Dogmatist, that we have neither of these twain sorts of cocksure folk in our poet. He is agnostic, bu'

reverently disposed towards any transcendental God; profoundly trustful and devout in attitude towards an immanent God; and indulgent toward all idols—"God-notions" presumed ultimate, externally alive, effective and dominant; for they are but man's intellectual moral, emotional and physical "bests" or ideals, projected illusively for more ardent and loyal service and adoration. Let us peruse, then, the Proemion as Englished by John Addington Symonds.

PROEMION TO GOD AND THE WORLD.

To Him who from eternity, self-stirred,
Himself hath made by his creative word;
To Him, who seek to name him as we will,
Unknown within himself abideth still:
To Him supreme who maketh faith to be,
Trust, hope, love, power, and endless energy.

Strain ear and eye till sight and sound be dim,
Thou'lt find but faint similitudes of Him;
Yea, and thy spirit in her flight of flame
Still tries to gauge the symbol and the name:—
Charmed and compelled thou climbs't from height to height
And round thy path the world shines wondrous bright;
Time, space and size and distance cease to be,
And every step is fresh infinity.

What were the God who sat outside to see
The spheres beneath His finger circling free?
God dwells within, and moves the world and moulds;
Himself and nature in one form enfolds:
Thus all that lives in Him and breathes and is,
Shall ne'er His presence, ne'er His Spirit miss.

The soul of man, too, is an universe;
Whence follows it that race with race concurs
In naming all it knows of good and true,
God—yea, its own God—and with honor due
Surrenders to His sway both earth and heaven,
Fears Him, and loves, where place for love is given.

Eins und Alles, "All and the One" and *Vermächtniss,* "My Legacy," are in the same stanza-form, and are knit together by common lines, the first stanza of the latter taking up the conclusion reached in the last sextet of the former.

Urworte, "Oracular Words" (to which the poet wrote some helpful prose comments), relates in more generic, and by the use of myth and obsolete theory, more imaginative form, the same great doctrine of life, spiritual but not transcendental; deliberately self-limited to the hither bank of the Styx. Being yet unghosted, if he should take a trip with Charon at all, Goethe insists on returning to the familiar side of body and form, of sense and reason.

"All and the One," "My Legacy" and "Oracular Words" form in the mind's eye a little book of parchment in black letter with golden capitals and cherry-red rubrics—for the pocket of the devout Naturalist. And, any such book of devotion (of hard sayings, hard because, to the sayer, final) must be prized by every man, whatever his own philosophic label or ecclesiastical niche.

ALL AND THE ONE

On the one hand, the individual as a self-conscious repellent entity; and on the other hand, the many others which for the former in their relative vagueness of particularization (as contrasted with his own vivid, emphatic, unique certainty

to himself) vaguely integrate in a manifold general; and these twain in eternal antithesis and conflict: Who of ardent sensitive souls does not at times weary of them, and long for total fusion, unity, the absolute of conscious bliss realized in the lapse from separate consciousness? No function is well performed while we are aware of the process. Acute consciousness is for fresh experiments. For the well-tried and mastered—unconscious performance or rather performance conscious of body ease and soul ease, perfect function and complete life. So this mystic self-surrender seems a finding of the true Self.

SELF-SURRENDER.

Ay, self to find in the boundless Vast
Gladly the One were lost at last,
  All chafe and coil dissolved away;
No heat of lust, wild will grim set,
Irksome demand, stern duty's threat;
  Self—yielded up—what ecstasy?

But if it be no illusion that in this experience some Soul of the Whole takes possession of the part, the self-surrender is not for its own sake surely, but for a taking possession in our turn of the thought which that Soul of the Whole thinks in its very self. Interpenetration, if real, is mutual. And indeed, so have the sages taught. Each brings back to the plane some token of his divine intercourse on the mount, which in turn shall lead his disciples to climb for themselves the steep ascent.

ATONEMENT.

Soul of the world, come thrill us through!
To wrest from the world-mind the True
  Were chiefest use, then, of our strength.
Kind spirits beckon and proffer aid;
To Him who maketh all, and made,—
  The foremost masters lead at length.

And what do we see from the divine height? A perpetual process of creation! The formless, formed; and form reformed. A perpetual onward, that whatever it aims at—if it aim at all with manlike intelligence and volition—at all events refuses to be arrested at any stage, however noble, of the eternal process.

CREATION.

To shape again the fashioned shape—
Lest, stiff, it rear and ramp agape,—
  Is wrought by th' onward Thrust of life.
What was not, now would come to birth
In clear bright sun, or motley earth,—
  But never to rest from change and strife.

And whence this "onward Thrust of life?" Apparently, not from without. An inherent necessity! Yet the type is recurrent through the ever-changing forms. And that type would break asunder, and the All become nothing, if anywhere at any time any part should persist in self-identity. For the type is a moving type—a mode itself of motion, which can only continue true to itself in change.

EVOLUTION.

Live shall they, and press with fashioning strain,
The self-framed shape transformed amain;
  But seldom seem they stayed and still.
The Abiding goeth forth in all;
For the All to utter Nought must fall
  If held to being with stark self-will.

MY LEGACY

Vermächtniss, "My Legacy"; my will and testament; whereby I empower you to become child of my spirit; bearing therein my witness to life, and transmitting to you my holiest wisdom; the net result of that hazardous ethical experiment in living I conducted, with as complete a freedom as sane mind and sound heart allow a civilized and cultured man. Wherefore accept my legacy, and use it, for what may be to you its vital worth.

If all is thus in flux—why fear? That which thou lovest about thee if it be as real as thou must float with thee down the self-same stream. Set thy heart on things that verily be, and know that the "Eternal" is in the transient; vanished spring returns and the set star rises again. Thou hast no true cause for alarm.

EXISTENCE

What is—to Nought can nowise fall.
The Abiding goeth forth in all.
Thy bliss in being then have and hold;
For Being abideth ever; and laws
Thy living hoard shall keep, because
The All decked him therewith of old.

And truth, be sure, is never new—though new to thee. What thou findest to be true, call it by whatsoever name thou please, is what from the beginning made human life possible; and has for primal source—that which ordered suns and planetary orbits—and holds them what they are.

REASON

Time out of mind, the truth was found,—
And the high fellowship of souls close-bound.
Hold fast the eldest Truth, and thank,
O child of earth, for wisdom—One
Who bade earth wing her 'round the sun,
Hosting her brethren rank on rank.

As thou hast no right to conceit of the intellect, neither hast thou right to irresponsible wilfulness in conduct. In every being works its organic law. In thee, too, it may be discerned by thee; and so from the oracle within shalt thou get thee guidance for the hour of bewilderment and gloom.

CONSCIENCE

Now straightway to within thee turn;
That midmost spot wilt thou discern
No man of worth can dare gainsay.
Hast lack there of no rule or 'heat:
For love—self-gotten—of the best
Is sun unto thy duty's day.

Das Selbständige Gewissen—the self-dependent consciousness of one's true nature and interest—will guide thy life so far as the organic and individual being constitute it; but there is a partner to thy life:—the outer world thou must come to know, and estimate through sense and critical intelligence. Observe closely, scrutinize, classify—and use.

So guided by conscience and science, the world is thy patrimony—and no ghoul or demon shall say thee nay.

UNDERSTANDING

In th' body's wits put childlike faith;
They cheat not ever with lie or wraith
Whom the quick mind shall ward from sleep.

With keen glad eye go mark and learn;
Fare safe, howso thy path may turn,
Through a world of wealth far-strown and deep.

Yet beware! The world is thine. But let it not wrest thee from thy true interest. Thy life of retrospect must not be marred. Store thy mind with assimilable memories only. Surfeits and excesses —however at the time they may be insolently joyful—are loathsome afterward, and need to be forgotten. Thou wilt have to lose some of thy memories to endure the present; and the obstinate ghosts of retrospect will flee to rearward, only to meet thee in prospect and bar the way with nightmare hideousness. Wherefore, so live the actual life that thy mental life shall be a continuous sweetly, sanely memorable whole;—that, like a symphony, its end shall be an *encore* of pious gratitude.

PRUDENCE

In plenty and weal, taste—and forbear,
Be Heed still bidden, and well aware
When life of life hath cheer and glee;
So shall the bygone day abide,
And time forefeel the unborn tide,
And the brief Now—forever be!

Yet such living is an art acquired only by practice. Some accidental discords will need resolving. And through these experiments, thou wilt discover the only standard of truth and value:—good and blessed consequences. So, thou wilt learn how dispassionately to observe mankind, that lives no such life as thou fain wouldest:—their conventional choices—their perpetual *da*

capos of folly and futility—and shalt be well content with the intimate company of those few, who, like thee, would make their lives, so much as in them lieth, things of beautiful use:—

WISDOM

And hast thou got thee skill herein,
Throughly to feel, and surely ween:
"What fruiteth well alone is true"—
Behold thou long the common sway—
What dooms it deemeth on for aye—
And fellow thee unto the few.

Yet if thou wouldest help them forward, do so not by attempted violence. Like philosophers and poets, take the privilege of directing the currents of their psychic experience into good channels. Surely, no more satisfying function, no more delightful expense of vital energy is possible!

VOCATION

And, as of yore alone and still
Some work love-born of their own will
The men of lore and song-craft 'gat,—
Thou winnest gift most fair: to fashion
High souls with thine own thought and passion!
What call or task shall better that?

For lo! thou hast exercised the prophetic office—anticipated their thought and feeling—because thou hast thereto incited them with thine; unconsciously, they have accepted thy patterns, seen by thee in "thy mount"; and as thou aspiredst and didst create—so shall they come to *be* in deed, and therefore, also, in truth.

V.

URWORTE, ORPHISCH

Oracular Words in Orphic Manner

And now having made the above "will and testament" to the children of his spirit, Goethe shall say farewell to us so far as this paper is concerned in his "Oracular Words in Orphic Manner:" Individuality, Environment, Passion, Necessity, and Aspiration; for which the reader needs now no comment. Of course, Astrology, the myth of Primal Eros, and the myth of the three Sisters and their Weird (taken in its Hellenic form) help to give impassioned expression to the philosophy of our non-transcendental Idealist, our glad-hearted, keen-witted Naturalist—the poet of "Faust," parts first and second, of "Egmont" and of "Iphigenia in Tauris," in which the life-passion, heroism, and sincerity of the modern soul, have their loftiest poetic expression hitherto vouchsafed the creative spirit of man.

DAMON

The Genius, Individuality, Innate Character

Yea, as the sun (what day thy life was leant
  The world) did stand each planet's sphere to greet—
So throv'st thou erst, obedient to thy bent,
  By that same law which hither sped thy feet.
Such must thou be. None yet his Self outwent,
  This rede sybil and seer of old repeat;
For never time nor might could break asunder
The shape seed-hidden, whose life unfolds its wonder.

DAS ZUFÄLLIGE

Luck, Environment

Yet somewhat doth with gracious tread outgo
The straitest bound, and with and round us move.
Not lonely long; with fellows dost thou grow,
As oth'r well do, doth thee to do behoove.
Now for and now against thee falls the throw!
Thy life a game whose chances thou must prove.
The years, unnoted, have their ring united,
And now, the lamp doth lack the flame to light it.

LIEBE

Passion, Love.

Not long it tarrieth. From heaven He flings
Whereto He soared out of the primal Void.
Lo, hither he hovereth on airy wings
In Springtide about brow and breast light-buoyed,
Feigning to flee, with subtle home-flutterings.
Then weal is woe—panic with sweetness cloyed.
Some hearts waste in the many their emotion;
The noblest to one only vow'th devotion.

NÖTHIGUNG

Necessity, Fate

Then once more 'tis—even as the stars deem just:
Condition and law and the will of all—be will
For that alone in sooth we ought and must!
Each wilful wish before that Will hushed still.
What most we prize from the heart's core we thrust.
Mood, will and whim the hard "thou shalt" fulfill.
So fare we yet, in seeming freedom, yearly
More close beset than erst and hemmed more nearly.

HOFFNUNG

Hope, Aspiration

But from such metes and bounds, such walls of brass
The stubborn gates unbolt them and unbar,
Tho' ancient as the hills their rocklike mass.
A Spirit light-flitteth, untrammelled; lo, we are
From cloudrack, reek and rain upcaught, and pass
Breathless with her, given wings of her, afar.
Ye know her well. No realm her revel may banish.
One wing beat—and the worlds behind us vanish!

After considering this lofty poem,—which in the view of the present writer almost bears to Goethe's work the relation borne by *Das Ideal Und Das Leben* to Schiller's,—one is hardly ambitious to invite a sudden anti-climax. Yet, perhaps, it is not altogether well if we let some readers ascend vertiginously into the upper air, without providing them betimes with a licensed parachute. Goethe at least mingled sober, imaginative, earnest, and gracious or pungent jest in the treatment of the very loftiest themes. For instance the materialistically inclined physicist is forcibly told:

> "Is not Nature's inmost core
> In the heart of men?"

Again, Parmenides is made to tell his questioners that if, when they mystically withdraw into their inmost self, they fail to find themselves confronted on the spot with the infinity of spirit (or wit) and wisdom, it is surely nowise the fault of the philosopher's doctrine! Such a great variety of poems offer themselves indeed to the expositor of Goethe, who would let himself down from the heights of breathless awe, that in our *embarras de richesse* we will settle upon two pieces which have a special message for such readers as desire the creation of an American Literature.

On his seventy-fifth birthday (August the 28th, 1824) Goethe addressed the future poets of the world concerning what, in a foregoing essay on

Translation, we ventured to lay down as the principal law of the true Translator. First the poet shall live and then write; first "*dichten*" (compose the imaginative whole) and then "*malen*" (paint, represent the mental color with visible pigment of word and phrase). The serious style, Matthew Arnold's style of high seriousness, the ultimate secret of the eternity ascribed to imperishable forms,—is got of writing directly out of one's very head and heart. He reminds them how it had been only by a providential gift from the gods, that is, a stormy burst of growth, German poetry escaped its fate in a hothouse of the erudite and artificial, carrying the hothouse gaily along with it into the skies. But when his eyelids will close forever, a soft, yet persuasive refracted light, emanating from his works and those of his peers, shall reach, he hopes, the future poets, by which Germany's latest scion of the Muse may be taught to report eventually in higher prophetic judgments yet nobler truths concerning God and Man than were given to him for speech and song. Similarly he admitted, nay welcomed, the need for each new age of its own ending to his Faust. We have here indeed a worthy pride joined to a devout modesty, that may commend Goethe to our aspirants after poetic fame. But how will they enjoy his farther admonishment?

> America thy Fate is better
> Than ours on this old continent;
> No ruined keeps thy fancy fetter,
> No basalt of eruptions spent.
> So, in the living active present

Inly art thou not perplexed
By memories, vain, however pleasant,—
Nor by bygone conflicts vexed.
In thy use of the present, God speed thee;
But if ever child of thine boasts
Of the Muse, kind Fate, I reed thee,
Save him from robbers, knights, ghosts!

Alas, alas, Longfellow? Poe? Hawthorne? We hang our heads in sorrow, and dire misgiving causes the knees of our spirit to totter. But shall such a hard saying be taken to prophecy and approve the aesthetic spread-eagle, whilom a-yawp in post-bellum Manhattan, or more tunefully even now, if less vitally, upon the sun-ruddied Coast-range of the Pacific, reminicently dubbed by Cincinnatus, alias Joaquin Miller, the Sierras?

We are loth to quote the great Goethe in authoritative furtherance of any cause, however near our heart, unless the quotation be ascertainably fair and true to its context of intention. We are not of those who would willingly be jibed at of the great Olympian:

Da loben sie den Faust
Und was noch sunsten,
In meinen Schriften braust
Zu ihren Gunsten;

which rendered impromptu,—or rather prompted by the imp of doggerel—might be Englished as follows:

So my Faust they loudly laud,
And all thoughts else and emotions
Which through my writings roar abroad
In unison—with their notions!

Indeed, so great and manifold was the imaginative power, the serious depth, the lightness of

heart, the flashes of wit, the sheer mischief and childish play of Goethe, that one could quite plausibly quote him on any side of every controversy, arrogate for him good standing in all the several sects whatsoever, or curse him with bell, book, and candle in mediaeval fervor, for every heresy, possible and impossible, since Adam. Suffice it this once then, if we have effectively testified to his religious and philosophic integrity, moral elevation and piety; having also shown him, in conclusion, most kindly disposed towards us of the new dispensation, which began, be it known unto all men, with the notorious Tea-Party on Boston Bay.

UNTRANSCENDENTAL OPTIMISM AND THE POETRY OF GEORGE MEREDITH.

The reading public as a whole were never much addicted to early rising. They are deaf, usually, to the persistent crowing of literary cocks. For them the lifting of heavy eyelids constitutes sunrise. It has happened sundry times, therefore, that long after the strutting fowl of the barnyard had ceased to make any further vocal efforts at arousing the somnolent, a poet's genius did not appear as it should have done, dutifully meek at the horizon, but has most disagreeably flashed all at once from the zenith, as if expressly created there on the spot out of nothing by some piece of critical legerdemain! Then, to have the startled public assure one that this particular orb of genius is unbecomingly sudden in its celestial *debut,* and not very considerate of eyes unused to high light, is apt to divert not a little the malicious on-looker.

The public—so far as Meredith is concerned—are at last aroused. They have rubbed—nay, opened—their eyes; they have yawned and stretched, and lo! a new star in the border sky of Great Britain! An edition of select poems for readers equally select is the commercial conse-

quence.* Perhaps, however, one of those critics who crowed himself hoarse all but in vain a little while ago may claim that the publication in question was the rude punch in the comfortable ribs that finally awoke the snorer. Be that, however, as it may. Let them fight it out together—half-awake public and throatsore critics. It may serve to put the contestants in full possession of their wits, and obviate any fatal relapse into the arms of Morpheus.

It is surely a good while, at all events, since the student of Meredith's unique novels became aware that his master, philosopher though he might be termed—psychologist and moralist in any case—is essentially a child of the Muse; a perverse one, it may be, lost in the far country of abstruse reasoning, but none the less beloved of her. Who ever read of Richard and Lucy and their young love, and failed to know the poet? Just as Browning presumed that "care for a man and his work" should assist the reader in overcoming what "defects of expression" might inhere in his poem, and refused such a revison of his first conception as should make it a different thing, so Meredith was no producer of wares for the bookseller. He, too, did his best, and was content to abide the issue of the mute controversy between him and the public that would not read him.

No advantage will be gained by the advocate of

*This paper was written on the occasion of the appearance of "Selected Poems of George Meredith," Scribner's, '97.

Meredith's cause as a great writer if he claims for his style simplicity in the sense of perspicuousness. Far more helpful will it be to offer a few suggestions as to the nature and cause of its obscurity than to spend breath in denial, futile, however sincere. And surely it were well worth while to prove that, if "defects of expression" are admittedly his, they are such as might be reasonably expected in a poet who should at the same time be an acute thinker, in one who is impelled to clothe original thought with a body of original diction prepared expressly for it. What is to be conveyed and the verbal vehicle are equally unfamiliar. Now, the ordinary reader likes commonplace thought in novel language, or startling conceptions in conventional words; and no one surely should blame such as cannot swim for refusing to venture out of their depth without a life-preserver.

I. *Style.*

Some of Meredith's poems are not understood even by a scrupulous student till he has reached for the sixth or seventh time the last word. It may be that we moderns have lost and not re-discovered the "art of reading," or it may be that our poet's modes of utterance are peculiar. A waggish acquaintance of the present writer demanded of his bookseller a special discount when purchasing "A Reading of the Earth" on the score of the omitted words he should have to supfor himself. Yet, since the compositor is paid

at no higher rate for the visible type than for the clear space after each line of verse, on the principle, doubtless, that the suggestively vague is fully as much prized by the poetic connoisseur as the precisely defined, it was evidently unreasonable to imagine that economic reasons had induced this writer to practice such cruel excision. Certain it is, however, that stolen articles and particles, missing pronouns, verbs, and nouns, are often solely responsible for our initial despair! In many cases a freer distribution even of commas, parentheses or dashes, a charity of coppers in a good stylist, would help the average reader's poverty of wit not a little, and at all events preserve him from precipitate suicide. In my own case (and no one should presume to speak for another) it is not the strictly philosophical passages that have occasioned most perplexity. It was, as a rule, when describing common phenomena of nature that our poet forced me to count my readings of a passage by the score. It would seem as if a frantic dread of the commonplace had made our author flee into remote fastnesses of unintelligible metaphor, impregnably fortified besides by hitherto inconceivable syntax.

May one venture on a figurative account of what not rarely happens? Mr. George Meredith in the sanctuary of his poetical consciousness, remote from the vulgar world, lawfully affiances and marries a feeling or an idea to an image. They are in his sight thenceforth one flesh. For better, for

worse, for richer, for poorer, till death them do part, they are inseparable, nay—cannot even for a moment be imagined otherwise than together. Consequently, he feels that he has done his full duty by us non-initiates when he sets but one striking word in a verse of his poem that has reference to some particular feature, say, of the image, the bride. If you are shrewd enough to see before you, as you undoubtedly should, the image in its entirety, the bride in all her beauty, with the one feature, definitely represented by a word in the verse especially prominent, it is yet by no means certain that you will be visited at once by a mental vision also of the lawful husband of the image—the feeling or idea. In spite of all Platonic fictions, it were unsafe to infer the nature of the groom from your acquaintance with the bride. The fate which presides over human matings is proverbially ironical. In the case of the marriages between word images and feelings or ideas, at which, as poetic high priest, Mr. Meredith officiates, the secret of their mutual fitness, and of the due performance of the binding rites, also, is too often his and theirs alone. However, after patiently studying the master and his undoubtedly peculiar ways, one becomes so used to expecting the unexpected as to be seldom disappointed.

In a word, then, the first source of the reader's perplexity is undoubtedly found in our poet's

vivid metaphors, though these are in themselves, one must admit, very beautiful or very strong.

> I gazed, unaware
> How a shaft of the blossoming tree
> Was shot from the yew wood's core.
> ("The Trial of Faith." P. 360.*)

The wild cherry tree was startlingly outlined by the somber background of the yew. It suggested the bow. The rays of light from the bloom were the arrows. Yes, this is a wonderful figure, in itself a poem; for the yew in turn becomes the symbol of the poet's battle with tempestuous sorrow, the gloom of bereavement needed to set off the joy of spiritual life into divine relief. Such an involution of soul into a bit of landscape does more than amaze. Nor is it uncommon in the philosophic poems of our author, though not always as fortunate in its æsthetic result as this oft-quoted instance:

> Strange,
> When it strikes to within, is the known;
> Richer than newness revealed. (p. 359.)

Indeed, he makes familiar aspects of nature "strike within us," and we are grateful to him.

Another and less legitimate source of perplexity must, however, be pointed out. Often the less obvious, the more delightful a metaphor in the end. But most of us have come to think it a matter of good breeding in metaphors to present themselves singly. In Meredith's poems they

*References are by page to "Poems," Scribner's, '98.

come hand in hand, and close on one another's heels.

The fact is, analysis has gone so far with Meredith that the sentence is no longer the poetic unit. If, therefore, one figure should, in his expression of a simple thought, best fit the subject, while quite another is most suited to the predicate, he will not scruple to do separate justice to subject and predicate by arraying each in its most becoming garb, even if the sentence as a whole shall go motley.

> Naught else are we when sailing brave
> Save husks to raise and bid it burn. (p. 330.)

In previous lines he had called the "rapture of the forward view" the "freight" of his senses, which are a "ship" "driving shoreward" and doomed to split. The "thought" survives the wreck; "what I am," the senses, must perish. Then follow those two verses which abruptly shift the scenery. We see the ships transformed to "husks," the "thought" cargo to a germ. But the germ's life will rise in due time like a tongue of green flame, and it is therefore said to "burn" before our eyes.

> Glimpse of its livingness will wave
> A light the senses can discern
> Across the river of the death,
> Their close.

Here we have once more a sudden shift of the scene. The senses are neither "ship" nor "husk." Behold, they are foot-sore wayfarers. At the river of death they stop dismayed. It is

the close of their journey. But ere they drown in their hopeless effort to ford the cold stream, from the other bank, which they may never reach, a "light" they can just discern is "waved" by the "thought" that was before a ship's cargo, and more recently a germ. Now, taken as a whole, this is a tolerably clear case. We can disentangle the knotted threads of metaphor and enjoy each by itself.

Sometimes, however, though they form only a mechanical and not a chemical compound, it is more difficult to isolate the figurative elements.

> They have not struck the roots which meet the first
> Beneath, and bind us fast with Earth. (p. 341.)

Such a crowding of metaphors mutually exclusive into one single statement makes severe demands on the reader. If he is to see what the poet saw, and feel what he felt, he will have to restate imaginatively the complete thought as many separate times as there are figures suggested; and, after appreciating the individual effect in turn of all these modes of expression, fuse the effects together in one general impression. Only thus can the abstract, emotive, or intellectual results of the series of poetic visualizations be obtained—a perhaps less poetic result than one large single vision, which should continue in the reader's memory to embody the whole thought or feeling—but one in which we may perhaps have gained as much in life as we have lost in æsthetic repose.

A common delight will drain
The rank individual fens
Of a wound refusing to heal
While the old worm slavers its root. (p. 366.)

Here we are made first to think of fens of sorrow drained by dutiful service to reason; then of a wound of sorrow healed by that service; then of the old worm, self, slavering the root of the sorrow—unless, indeed, the slavering worm of self is to be understood as sorrow's root.

It is easy to see how such a method works confusion. We have here really the "catalogue" of Walt Whitman concealed by a violent, merely formal sentence-structure. Subject and predicate do not in their poetic guise recognize each other. A critic might be pardoned if he should declare that Mr. Meredith's sentences in his philosophical poems are frequently algebraic expressions in need of factoring ere they can be intelligently dealt with, and that he sometimes chuckles audibly at the reader's discomfiture when the method of factoring is far from obvious. You have to meet with passages like this:

On the thread of the pasture you trace,
By the river, their milk, for miles,
Spotted once with the English tent,
In days of the tocsin's alarms,
To tower of the tallest of piles
The country's surveyor breast high.

The general sense is clear, but who is expert algebraist enough to factor it at sight?

Of course, the studious reader experiences a certain intellectual satisfaction when he has conscientiously performed his task and proved suc-

cessful at it; but, to be frank, it is not exactly the kind of satisfaction he has been led to expect from poetry by the past masters of the art.

All this is said by one who fully appreciates what Mr. Meredith has done; who could not possibly content himself with "Modern Love" or a selection; who insists on the value of the philosophic poems. Forewarned is forearmed. If you know the nature of the difficulties, they will not appear so formidable. Besides, you will not then court the humiliation of defeat by attacking the philosophic poems in an hour of mental weakness, when really in need of the rest cure which Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and other mild-mannered physicians of the muse are ready, nay, eager enough to offer.

II. *"Man."*

Now, the object of this paper is to unfold in the poet's own words his philosophy of life. It is the same philosophy that generates the wholesome atmosphere of the novels. From it, as moral deductions, proceed those judgments on the creatures of his imagination, which the reader may take, if unacquainted with his poems, for spontaneous and special oracles, when he does not, indeed, resent them as irrelevant or captious.

If the difficulties of style that have been frankly admitted keep any from acquainting themselves with these philosophical poems, we shall be tempted to fling at them his own words about the thrush:

Heed him not, the loss is yours![1]

And if, indeed, as he intimates, he be only

A herald of a million bills,

and their song is to be like his, as presumably it shall (else why should he be at pains to announce them?), does it not seem the part of the wisely valiant man to make terms with this shrill-piping herald, ere the whole army arrives in the arrogance of numbers?

Mine are these new fruitings, rich,
The simple to the common brings;
I keep the youth of souls who pitch
Their joy in this old heart of things.

Who feel the Coming, young as aye,
Thrice hopeful on the ground we plow;
Alive for life, awake to die;
One voice to cheer the seedling Now.[2]

I say but that this love of Earth reveals
A soul beside our own to quicken, quell,
Irradiate, and through ruinous floods uplift.[3]

Such is his own account of the special prophetic burden with which he has swung himself into the saddle of his lyric Pegasus. We wish him better luck than that of the grim rider from the Northland, who scared Europe with ghosts after breaking the back of his good steed.

Should we translate into more prosaic terms the resolution which Mr. Meredith has ventured not only to frame like a brave picture for our contemplation, but actually to send forth into the world of accomplished deeds—we might say that his verse shows such beauties in our common

[1] "The Thrush in February," p. 327, st. 2.
[2] *Ib.*, sts. 15, 16.
[3] "My Theme," p. 207.

earth, and common human life, as are revealed to the man who is active, courageous, unselfish, hopeful, simple of heart and mind; not as they seem to them who substitute fiction for fact, making "the truth" "according to their thirst;"[1] nor as they seem to those "sons of facts," "swinish grunters," who look on the earth as their "stye;" for our poet sees in earth the mother of man, whom to love is the joy of life, and whom to know, for potentially all that man actually is, constitutes the wisdom which renders this passionate loyal son's love of her reasonable.

As a poet Mr. Meredith does not, we dare assert, use his rather large terminology with absolute strictness. Yet, in a general way, we have a right to suppose that one who is constantly writing of flesh, blood, senses, lusts, heart, self, personality, bent, instincts, brain, mind, wits, reason, soul and spirit means something more or less definite by each term. There may be duplicates in the full list. There may be ambiguous uses of some. "Senses" means now the organs and their action; and then the pleasures incident to their action, hence becoming synonymous with flesh, blood, and lusts. "Self" and "personality" may be collective terms for lusts when invading higher domains of our being. "Bent" in the brute may be "instinct" in the man. "Brain," "mind," "wits" may be interchangeable terms. "Reason" might connote a distinct faculty, or it might

[1] "A Ballad of Fair Ladies in Revolt," st. 16.

indicate the mode of the mind's proper action in fellowship with the sensations. "Soul" may designate the purified affections, which, in their crude state, are called the "heart." "Spirit" is now a term for our love of law, our moral core; and then it stands for that mystical imagination which dreams through man "the better than man."

In any case, we shall not forget that Meredith, the poet, uses words to content his ear and his fancy quite as often as to gratify Meredith, the psychologist.

> From flesh unto spirit man grows,
> Even here on the sod under sun. (p. 367.)

This is the first article of his creed. Note each word: "Growth," not miraculous change; "here," not hereafter, thanks to the "sod" that supports and the "sun" that gives vital heat. But he is not content with this statement of fact. Some might admit that it "grows" when it chooses. Not so;

> Flesh unto spirit must grow.

There is no choice, no escape from the beautiful fatality; for contend we shall have to for sheer existence, and

> Contention is the vital force
> Whence pluck we brain. (p. 320.)

If we look out abroad at humanity in our day with the eye of the true seer, it is "the soul" we perceive "unfold" through "blood and tears"

(p. 348). If we look back and follow history to our time, we behold

> The tidal multitude, and blind
> From bestial to the higher breed
> By fighting (p. 331.)

slowly rise, and introspection reveals that

> We battle
> For the smallest grain of our worth (p. 364.)

as well as for the best and most priceless of our treasures:

> Wisdom is won of its fight,
> The combat incessant. (p. 366.)

Nay, more than this, the highest faculty, which is self of our self, it also,

> Spirit, is wrought . . . through strife! (p. 187.)

The faculties are related. They derive from one another.

> Rose in brain from rose in blood. (p. 80.)

They are friendly when kept for mutual service in the right order of subjection.

> Just reason based on valiant blood. (p. 331.)

Woe to reason, if it fancies justice possible without physical valor! Woe to the blood, if it dares be unjust!

"Sensation is a gracious gift" (p. 345); but "sensation insurgent" is "haunted of broods" of questions (p. 368) that only confuse sensation. "Brain" is the "sky of the senses" (p. 320); they are earth to that sky. Changing the figure, "the senses are the vessel of the thought" (p. 330), and they should be steered by "brain"

(pp. 320-1). But, mark you, what were a helmsman without a ship? In the service of brain "the senses must traverse" the "Road of the Real" "fresh"—not blinded by preconceptions and "with a love" for the road itself that "no scourge shall abate" (p. 364)—if we are ever

> To reach the lone heights where we scan
> In the mind's rarer vision this flesh. (p. 364.)

For while there are "holies from sense withheld," to which only "reason" can guide (p. 365), we shall want feet as well as a knowledge of the way.

Furthermore, "mind of man and bent of brute" "equally have root" in earth (p. 86). Instinct is not to be despised, for it is thus akin to mind. Indeed, "just reason" would be content if it could match "the instinct bred afield" (p. 331); and we are warned

> Not one instinct to efface
> Ere reason ripens for the vacant place. (p. 197.)

For "reason" is not yet ripe—only "man's" germinant "fruit" (p. 365); yet, even now, by it is the "reason hourly fed" (p. 332).

In its turn the "strong brain" is the "station for the flight of soul" (p. 321) in those who have

> Out of the sensual hive
> Grown to the flower of brain.

But the soul depends not only on the brain; "the heart, obedient to brain, prompts the soul" (p. 362). Yet the reason cannot dispense with service of what is higher than it. "No branch of Reason's growing" is to be "lopped." Let, therefore,

"spirit but be lord of mind to guide our eyes," and the noblest truths shall in time be ours.

Now, it is clear that all the exhortations of the poet would be quite impertinent were nothing amiss with man. It is a fact that something prevents man's "mind bursting the chrysalis of the blind" (p. 149) and seeing truly with the aid of spirit. It is the "distempered devil of self," the "glutton" of earth's "fruits."

Clearly enough, never

> 'Till our lord of sensations at war,
> The rebel, the heart, yields place
> To brain; (p. 362.)

never till we are one of those "who in harness the mind subserve," "having mastered sensation" (p. 367), which always, "at a stroke on the terrified nerve," proves "inane," and would counsel some coward's folly; never till then shall we have "earned" our "title" to "*read*" the truth of which the earth is but a glyph. For without the spirit we cannot, and

> The spirit comes to light
> Through conquest of the inner beast. (p. 320.)

Now, though this doctrine gives some place to asceticism, it refuses to view the "beast" that must be conquered, the "sensation" that must be mastered, the "heart" that must be forced to submission, as in themselves evil. They are part of our complete glory. It is only their insubordination that is harmful. Men are indeed to "attain" the "statute of the gods," "not forfeiting the beast" (p. 378). "Mind and body" shall

"lute" a "perfect concord." Again and again we are given to understand that it is a calamity when even for a moment "the nature" is "divided in three"—"heart," "brain," "soul" (p. 357). The highest of us must cherish the lowest of us in its place and for its function. The "mind" must be solidly built on her "foundation of earth's bed" (p. 359), for then, and then only,

> Never is earth misread by brain. (p. 320.)

If reason has any pre-eminent dignity, it is that she is "our bond with the numbers." She classes us; she insists on fair division; she limits our claim to our share; she

> Wrestles with our old worm
> Self in the narrow and wide.
> Relentless quencher of lies,
> With laughter she pierces the brute.

Not that she would slay—she has no hate, therefore no murderous intent—only she means to "scour" the "loathed recess of his dens" with that "laughter" which is light. She means to "scatter his monstrous bed" of comfortable sloth, and "hound him to harrow and plow;" for the "self" has work to do. Speculation is not his business. He cannot be allowed to bias the mind by his roars or howls of greed or pain. This "self," this blind craving, was the driving power. It is that still. But it drives man to ruin unless it remains in gentle control. The steam that can hurry tons of freight upon its way must yet heed the pressure of the engineer's hand, and bide its time.

If one would be blissful, one must learn to "look on with the soul"* only, and therefore to "desire" only "with the soul" (p. 75), to love with "the love over I and me" (p. 77), so that at length for us the

> Proud letter I
> Drops prone and void as any thoughtless dash. (p. 195.)

Then shall we, indeed, "spread light" and "feel celestially,"** for we shall "crave nothing" (p. 43) but to sing a "song" like that of the lark,

> Seraphically free
> Of taint of personality. (p. 114.)

Even a Callistes, who has seen the Great Mother herself, and in whom "whatsoever to men is of use" will unwittingly spring "worship of them who bestow" (p. 110), ceases, for all his wisdom and gratitude, to be "sane in his song" "where the cravings begin." For only he in whom the "dragon self" is not slain, but silenced, can become

> The voice of one for millions,
> In whom the millions rejoice
> For giving their one spirit voice. (p. 114.)

III. *The Earth.*

But if, indeed, man realizes his derivation from lower forms of life, how shall he regard the heavenly home which has witnessed his evolution? Is the earth friend or foe to him? To the man whom Mr. Meredith would have us be, her aspect and her office are a mother's that nobly loves the best

*The Woods of Westerman.
**The lark ascending.

in us, whose tenderness conceals itself in her pride.

From the earliest times true "souls of love," filled with an ardor for their species, have invariably "divined" a "higher breed," and striven to lead the "tidal multitude" to it from their "bestial" and "blind" condition. They readily recognized in this their ideal, the only explanation of the Mother's else incomprehensible dealings with her child. Hers also was the "thought to speed the race." "Her mystic secret" was so dear to her that, rather than reveal it, she would brook being misunderstood. Yet who capable of sympathizing with "her passion for old giant kind", for "champions of the race," "warriors of the sighting brain" who "give worn humanity new youth," could fail to apprehend her purpose? If she has always "scourged" or been "her offspring's executioner," it was surely for the sake of her holy vow to produce the "stouter stock."

> Life is at her grindstone set,
> That she may give us edging keen. (p. 320.)
>
> Behold the life at ease: it drifts.
> The sharpened life commands its course. (p. 320.)

From the very beginning of man

> Pain and Pleasure on each hand
> Led our wild steps from slimy rock
> To yonder sweeps of garden land, (p. 332.)

which it may take ages yet to attain and possess. "Earth yields the milk," to be sure, for the human suckling, but "she will soothe" tenderly his

"need" only, "not his desire." For her heart is full of a fury of prophetic love.

> Sons of strength have been
> Her cherished offspring ever. (p. 333.)

As in the past, so now; as now, so always hereafter; and well she knows that wheresoever "battle urges," there "spring heroes many."

> She who dotes over ripeness at play,
> Rosiness fondles and feeds,
> Guides it with shepherding hook
> To her sports and her pastures alway. (p. 363.)

She who "loves laughter" and the "kindly lusts" when the "weak" "wail," "the wail animal infant," she has only a deaf ear and an iron heart.

> Weep, bleed, rave, writhe, be distraught—
> She is moveless. (p. 363.)
>
> Not she gives the tear for the tear. (p. 363.)

The child that misreads her purpose she will not spare, for it is he who needs her severity. She is proud of his very fire of hate. But of them who are her children indeed, after the spirit as well as according to the flesh, of them is she justified. He

> Whom the century tempests call son,
> Having striven to rend him in vain, (p. 356.)

who has not got thew and brawn only in the conflict, but has been in the end able to "pluck brain" also, the veritable "man's mind" that knows itself the "child of her keen rod," rich in the "hard wisdom" which his mother earth gave him, he assuredly understands that if she seem to be of "us atomies of life alive unheeding," it is

not that she hates life, but is "bent on life to come." It is clear to him that "in her clods" is the "footway to the God of gods" along which we must pass, while for the sake of her holy hope she drives us, using, as need may be, "the spur and the curb."

She does not willfully leave us in darkness; but she gives us no more light than we can bear. "If we will," we may be "wise" "of her promptings"; for surely she never ceases to whisper the suggestive words in our ears. The "woodcutter Death," who is he, if not a disguise of our Mother? We fear him, we hate him? Yet

> For use he hews
> To make awake
> The spirit of what stuff we be. (p. 383.)

As he "clears" our globe, we may be satisfied it is, "though wood be good," for "braver" human forests. Whatever we may think, however we may feel, certain it is beyond doubt that for all of us "the end is one." "We do but wax for service." We must actively or passively be a party to the slaying of our fellows, and some day to the slaying of us, that "our ground" "may speed the seed of younger" growths, and in due time be more royally "crowned" with life.*

Does this seem a monstrous doctrine? Shall we rebel at the thought that "we breathe but to be sword or block?" Is not death a mere word after all? a mere mark and disguise? "The fuel,

*Woodman and Echo.

decay, brightens the fire of renewal." If "we wot of life" it is "through death." Constantly among the living we "spy" "how each feeds each." Here there is no exception. We are all "fed" "by Death as by Life." How if "the two" fountains of our nourishment were "one spring"—twin breasts of the same mother? "Life and Death in one"—"whichever is, the other is"—what if indeed it were so—"one—as our breath in and out?" At all events, the birds, when they pipe

> The young Earth's bacchic rout,
> The race, and the prize of the race,
> Earth's lustihead pressing to sprout, (p. 356.)

are really quite as much singing of death. Death is not the opposite of life, but of birth; and both birth and death are but names for the single process of life, "the springing to be," "the coming" which is "young as aye," at all times the same "seedling Now."

When, at length, then, we have understood the conduct of our Mother, proved her "loving" and "reasonable," only more ideally and constantly so than we, it remains for us to imitate her example. From our double discovery as premises we must draw the ethical and spiritual conclusions with perfect courage. They who "read aright her meaning" cannot but "*devoutly* serve," for the "task" of their Mother "devolves on them." They must catch her "passion." Nor is it as though they might refuse service.

> This breath, her gift, has only choice
> Of service—breathe we in or out. (p. 332.)

It is only a choice between unwillful and devout service, the slave's or the son's.

From the noble thought, then, of the Mother's "loving" and "reasonable" temper comes our first moral maxim of work, its own reward in the play of our powers and their normal increase, "Thrice hopeful on the ground we plow" deeming it "enough if we have sped the plow a season."

A cold thing, however, will our morality be if it is not fired with love; and only that which lives can be most satisfyingly loved. We shall begin, then, our religious life with the dogma that she is a "thing alive to the living," that "her aspects mutably swerve," but "her laws immutably reign." For

> Till we conceive her living we go distraught,
> Seeing she lives, and of her joy of life
> Creatively has given us blood and breath. (p. 187.)

But more; not mere animation is hers. We must come to "know" the "life of her" for "spirit." Of the stars, sisters of earth, it is true that "the fire is in them whereof we are born," else how came we from one of them? When by the manifold sacraments of earth and sky and stellar heavens we have come to realize that everywhere "life glistens on the river of the death," and we see about us among our fellow-beings "battle," "loss," "ache," we shall "know" it for earth's "pledge of vitality" inexhaustible, and with our

"spirit wrought of her through strife" we shall "read her own" spirit; and because of our "love of earth," which the singing lark instills, "*trust* her down to death," even for "the *love* that lends her grace among the starry fold."

IV. *The Invisible.*

To many this view of man and the earth may seem atheistic. If so, it will be because they cannot believe in a "credible God." To them there is war in heaven. Seen is arrayed against unseen. Having used their eyes to little or no purpose, they think ill of the visible, and imagine, naturally enough, an Invisible to their liking. Such, at all events, is a succinct statement of Mr. Meredith's scrupulous apology, which took the shape of a synoptic philosophy of history in somewhat unlovely verse, classified, surely not for music's sake, with "Songs and Lyrics of the Joy of the Earth."

That such an apology should have been written was to be expected. The poet could not remain long unaware how offensive to many must be the burden of his manly prophecy. To his worthy British public a "credible God" would hardly seem divine. Efforts to make our faiths produce into the unknown the lines of our actual knowledge, and attach our religious emotions to the common and normal rather than to the peculiar and unnatural, they would resent as gross mater-

ialism and irreverent impiety. Only one hope with this public: an appeal to precedent.

In Mr. Meredith's loveliest idyl, "A Day with the Daughters of Hades," the sweet girl goddess Skiagenia, born of gloom, convinces the reader that the wholesome Hellenic attitude of mingling love and awe toward the Great Mother is the very same suggested to-day by evolutional science when envisaging what is at once most homelike and most strange about this human star of ours, that encircles with perpetual worship her solar God of light and heat and life, concealing all the while an undefined, vast death and cold and darkness at the core. But what cares the British public for such a precedent? Has it not been led to believe that the Greeks were a spiritually shallow people, thanks to flagrant neglect of almost all that was deep in them?

So there was left for Mr. Meredith no possible way of obtaining a patient hearing for a theory which, while so obviously close at hand, found through the ages so few consistent friends, but that of apology. He must account for the general acceptance of the more fanciful hypothesis. It will not suffice to point out its fallacious character; he must also expose the nature of its insidious fascination, the source of its plausibility. In the following paragraphs the attempt shall be made, using his own words as often as possible, to state Mr. Meredith's view of the genesis of transcendentalism.

In the experience of the most undeveloped man there is much pain and little pleasure. He childishly ascribes to nature his own motives. He tortures his enemy. What then are his sufferings but the malice of a foe? But infrequent though they be, he has pleasures also. Now and then he is warmed, sheltered, and fed, his flesh thrilled with delight. Can there be one spring for bitter and sweet waters? Old men, discouraged and resentful, suggest that it is so. Pleasures are accorded by the same cruel power—a device of refined savagery to prevent the sufferer's becoming inured to his misery.

Young men, however, cannot accept this view. They observe that the old themselves continue to feed the flame of life, to fan it sedulously, to shield it from every whiff of dangerous wind. They have been occasionally thrilled by joys too intense to be held in memory as mere malevolent delusions. If Nature then must be viewed as hostile and wicked because inflicting hardship, peril, pain, they will explain their actual desire to live as an endurance of the now and the nigh because of a faith in some fictitious hereafter and afar; and lo, we have the visible devil and the invisible God of every sensational theology—the original points of departure for all transcendental systems of thought.

Put thus, it all seems absurd—nay, repulsive enough. But the "old men" with their "sentence of inverted wit" it is impossible to tolerate. Mr.

Meredith bids us, ere we take their testimony to life, inquire how they have lived. Nature clearly shows her dislike of the aged. She tolerates them only when they are sunsets to noble days.

As soon now as man's religion has come to consist of an unnatural passion for the Invisible a strange phenomenon appears. When he is weak, defeated, despondent, when his "senses" are "pricked by fright," when he indulges in a "ventral dream of peace," the hope of a stye somewhere for slothful feeding, he becomes religious. The moment he is strong and successful, he is amused or horrified to discover that he is simply irreligious. Still he knows that strength and success may not last. It is well to provide for relapses, failures. Hence he will continue to attach a large theoretic value to "the legends that sweep" nature "aside." He will extol the great merits—for others, and incidentally for himself (should he be unfortunate enough to require them)—of

> Assurance, symbols, saws,
> Revelations in legends, light
> To eyes rolling in darkness. (p. 363.)

But in due time man begins to reflect on life, to observe and generalize. He cannot but perceive how small the effect of these precious comforts in man's hours of need. Doubt begins, then doubt of his doubt.

Nature, of course, is unnatural—that is to say, inhuman—that much remains sure. The cruelest man will in the end be moved by contortions and

tears. There is in the order of things "an answer to thoughts or deeds." But those who "cry aloud for an opiate boon" receive small comfort from "a mother whom no cry can melt," who "will shear" the "woolly beast" that bleats too piteously. Yet man has ceased to be content with his original dualism. Somehow he must fit nature to his thought of the "Invisible." Hence futile metaphysics—inquiries that are doubts disguised, questions "that sew not nor spin," idle, vexatious, working only the total confusion of him who harbors them. For of course

> A mind in a desolate mood,
> With the "whither" whose echo is "whence," (p. 371.)

will become in times of distress the victim of contending passions.

> Now to the Invisible he raves
> To rend him from her

his unacknowledged Mother; then, his cry unanswered, he "craves her calm, her care," falling back on despised material solaces and distractions. But, so appealed to, the Mother, who else is lavish of her boons, becomes obdurate.

> For the flesh in revolt at her laws
> Neither song, nor smile in ruth,
> Nor promise of things to reveal,
> Has she, nor a word she saith:
> We are asking her wheels to pause.
> Well knows she the cry of unfaith. (p. 363.)

Then, of course, there is nothing left to do but to turn "afresh to the Invisible," which he is pleased to imagine "can raise him high with vows of living faith." He asks no more for relief. He has be-

come modest in his demands. He wishes merely to have his belief affirmed by some "little sign" of "slaughtered Nature," some miracle that shall definitely prove that the power of Nature over him and his destiny has its limits. But his cry is in vain. No miracle comes. For a while he may content himself with "Legends." He may indeed lash himself to a frenzy and "conjure images." Yet in the end, sooner or later, he will be confronted by the fact that his "cry to heaven is a cry" to the earth "he would evade," his prayer to the Invisible being really addressed to nature and obtaining from nature such an answer as it is entitled to receive. At no time, then, in man's history has he conceived of the manly religion suited to his hours of strength and success. Let us not be dupes of professions. The British people vociferously sing,

> O Paradise, O Paradise,
> Who doth not crave for rest?
> Who would not seek that happy land, etc.,

while in fact they build up an empire with immense toil, showing that they mean to possess as much of the earth as they can, even if they jeopardize their heavenly inheritance by a lack of meekness! Actions speak louder than words. As a matter of history, who were the kind of men that have been worshiped as heroes? Those who indulged in slavish howls? who complained, pleaded for mercy? who offered a price for ease and happiness? Nothing of the sort. Always the hero,

he, whom men approved and wished to resemble, was

> A creature matched with strife
> To meet it as a bride

"through self-forgetfulness divine." Surely always, whatever our theological dualism and philosophical pessimism, it was men whose "love of earth was deep" that we set apart for the practical worship of imitation. They always were unspeculative men, who could join in the song of the woodland sprites:

> We question not, nor ask
> The silent to give sound,
> The hidden to unmask,
> The distant to draw near. (p. 344.)

They despised—even when they did not understand—

> Our sensual dreams
> Of the yearning to touch, to feel
> The dark impalpable sure,
> To have the unveiled appear. (p. 363.)

They assumed themselves, with a magnificent humility, to be revelations and incarnations of the spirit of earth. They refused worship, were unostentatious, took their virtue for granted, content to "serve and pass reward." In their heart of hearts, whatever their external religious conformity, they pitied him who "will not read" nature; who, "good or wise", preferring "with passion self-obscured" to see her distorted through a subjective medium,

> The greed to touch, to view, to have, to live,
> Through terror, through distrust;

Even at the present day, then, though transcendentalists in the closet, and theoretically disloyal to earth, in their hero-worship men prove that there is a deeper, saner, devouter religion deep in their hearts. In their hours of strength and success they feel it; but they are prevented from taking it seriously, because it seems so inconsistent with what they have been taught to regard as sacred. Yet in it is the bitter tonic which we need in our sentimental hours when we cry for the opiates. Mr. Meredith believes, then, that the religion of man in nature, the worship of strength, beauty, courage, magnanimity, is not so unfamiliar to us. Can we not join the hymn of the heroes?

> Let our trust be firm in Good,
> Though we be of the fasting;
> Our questions are a mortal brood,
> Our work is everlasting.
> We children of Beneficence
> Are in its being sharers;
> And "whither" vainer sounds than "whence"
> For word with such wayfarers. (p. 346.)

It is hardly necessary to weary the reader showing by quotations in what way this tonic will do the work of the coveted opiate; how, in Mr. Meredith's view, it comforts, makes strong, and therefore consoles more effectively than the sentimental fictions of transcendentalists.

V.

When the preceding pages were written the growing fame of George Meredith had come to justify commercially the appearance of his collected poems, as well as a volume of selections much needed to win him new friends among the more timid lovers of poetry. Up till then few but the youthfully rash or the inordinately brave had adventured and persevered. True, all had heard the report how that in the "Woods of Westerman" one might chance to meet face to face the good physician Melampus, or that at its farther edges maybe the "Skylark Ascending" might make the devout hearer "feel celestially", harkening

> "The song seraphically free
> Of taint of personality"

until he should become indeed

> "Through self-forgetfulness divine."

True, many had shared with Skiageneia and Callistes their single blessed day of mutual revelation. True, many had made their pilgrimage to the Valley where innocent love abideth; or beheld on the heights, one breathless time at least, the Dawn of Color, and its hallowed meanings; or shuddered with a delicious horror recalling the tale of Attila's bridal night;—which several experiences had, by the way, apparently been enjoyed without special prior training or serious peril to life and limb. Notwithstanding the pub-

lished volume of selections was a reassurance and a more alluring invitation. For there were not lacking such as feared our poet; one who could mock, for instance, the Empedocles of an Arnold, for insufficiently considering the aesthetic aspects of his final exit:—"The last of him was heels in air"; one who could expose to healthy contempt the "bile-and-buskin attitude" of Byron's Manfred; one who could villainously destroy the moonshine mood of our poetic "teens" with a cry to Hugo's high-strung Hernani:

"O the horn, the horn,
The horn of the old gentleman."

Surely our poet is not to be met after dark, if one carry about him any treasure of false sentiment. And many no doubt had cause to fear. Some few perhaps on the publication of the Selections perversely regretted that their singular cult might run the odious risk of profanation; but all sincere lovers of Meredith's poetry rejoiced, we believe, that their modest propaganda had the practical assistance at length of the needed publications.

A word of George Meredith's last volume, "A Reading of Life." To cherishers of the poems of "The Joy of the Earth" and of the deep and subtle "Reading of Earth" it brought no new message. Of course, the book was perused with breathless excitement. Had some ray of further light pierced the darkness for our seer? Or did he behold still the same faithful vision of a God

within things as they are for the heroic will to avow and serve?

Nothing new in thought. Little new even in method of expression. Only a larger, more immediately intelligible statement of the eternal question of pleasure and self-mastery; the prenatal history of man's spiritual life in the mother-womb of ever-gracious nature; the hopes to the race maturing in the loyal individuals who accept their vicarious function and priestly office.

The eightieth birthday of George Meredith made apparent to the dullest observer the claims long since past due of this the greatest literary man of his day. The tributes to him were on all hands generally reverent and affectionate. Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, and Fitz-Gerald, Rossetti and Morris were gone. Each had obtained his mead of well-earned praise. Meredith and Swinburne alone remained of the greater Victorian poets, and the former of the two had lived long enough to come into his own at last (surely matter for congratulation); and glad we were and surprised to realize how many we numbered, we hitherto silent reverers and lovers of our poet-sage. And now we have heard how this our wisest among the true sons of the Muse hath fallen on sleep, we do not doubt that many and curious will be the searchings of heart. To be sure, the obituary eulogies have not shown more than moderate contrition for the hitherto deafness of many an adder that refused to be charmed. A kind of irri-

tation invariably befalls the self-deemed astute, when they are compelled to admit they can see but as thro' a glass darkly. The difficulties of Shakespeare, the inscrutable mysteries of phrase and cadence in Tennyson, where more is meant than meets the mind; the vast meaninglessness, made up of countless little meanings, of a Swinburne, these give none offence. We remember the dramatic action, extol the dreamy atmosphere, take refuge in the obfuscations of an art-for-art's sake technique. But the fact that Meredith has baffled our wits is remembered against him even in death. Ah, but after, comes the saner re-appreciation! We have settled down in the midst of such many-columned black-bordered exploitation of our half-knowledge to a vigorous, and what bodes best, a modester study of the Master; so that ere long we shall doubtless forget whatever we wrote in our pique, and reconsider, and recognize George Meredith's real greatness in sheer self-vindication.

Browning has suffered from the misguided praise of his worst work by Browningites in quest of oracles; Tennyson somewhat less from an undiscriminating glorification of all his verse,—good, bad, and indifferent,—because of its uniform stylistic excellence; Morris has suffered more than either by a natural preference today for "Arts and Crafts"—reform, and the loud heroism of Socialistic agitation, over the divinest of poetic paradises; and Arnold, even, in some de-

gree has suffered as a poet by his successfully conducted controversies theological and aesthetic. George Meredith was most fortunate then in being generally known only for a few novels of peculiar, psychological, and imaginative interest, but caviare to the multitude of readers; too evidently heterodox to bring grist to the preacher's mill, as did Browning, and merit therefore homiletic exploitation; too conservative also of all noble traditions to raise the shout of radicals-on-principle, and be singled out for eccentric idol-worship by the seekers after new gods.

These novels, moreover, on which his wider reputation rested, are not novels as any hitherto. The story is implied, rather than told. The characters are considered, rather than dramatically portrayed. The ideas are intimated and viewed from many fantastic angles, rather than set forth for acceptance. It is all play of the mind—but for the mind that is wide awake, alert, agile, sophisticated to the point of a new simplicity born of reaction, sick of artifice, and interested in the rehabilitation of the commonplace by its subtler manifestations of the rare and fair. Nevertheless it is honest play, always honest play, that comments on wholesome bygone work, and prepares for vital predicaments to come. Who has played thus with Meredith in his novels—his intellect a-tingle, his heart enlarged to a benigner inclusion of affairs hitherto alien, his imaginative senses; rejoiced yet chastened—surely he has had

but little difficulty in recognizing the Spirit of the Poet, as one and the same with that of the thaumaturgist in prose fiction. The same attitude courageously rational, yet ever nobly reverent of the flesh; the same aspiration for a self-consciousness that shall duly pass by subtle degrees from a narrow ignorant to a larger disciplined oblivion of individual concerns; the same perception of an immanent cosmic wisdom in ignorancy, instinct, ay, and in the very follies incident to social life.

And what a range besides in this extraordinary fiction! From the perfect little tale of sentiment in which a Chloe is sainted, or from the burlesque, Arabesque lyrico-ludicrous extravaganza of Shagpat to that Supreme Modern Comedy of the Egoist, and the amazing maze of glosses and footnotes to the Book of Life with which he bade us his whimsically smiling farewell! Yet, from book to book migrates the same Meredithian spirit whom we know in more exquisite intimacy as the singer of those athletic songs which exalt fact, plus the fiat of man's soul, as the worshipfully divine.

Neither were the novels, so-called, chariots of ease for the defeated, the wounded, the way-weary. Each was a challenge to know the battle-thrill in concerns intellectual and in the affairs of the social spirit.

But so, too, some of us believe his poetry would gain but little in the end had it been more winsome than it is. Such as love our poet do not condone the difficulties and vaunted obscurity of his

poems, but smile, recalling virile initiations undergone of themselves in strenuous solitude ere they understood and presumed to enjoy. The very difficulties have "teased" them out of thought into a larger faith, elevated, mystic, yet without stultification.

For, such as love our poet, love in chief his very inmost personality. As they live with his best pieces, these draw nearer, and as they draw nearer wax dearer. Yet no one is found among his admirers and reverers to extol perversely his failures in craft, his baffling eccentricities of style. The great and beautiful pieces distinguish themselves almost at first glance for what they are, and the remainder we cherish for whatever kinship they possess with his masterpieces, and what precious secrets of their maker's spirit they may chance betray. For such as estimate the rank of a poet by the amount only of his work that exhibits the very highest quality, its singular rarity in kind, and the peculiar indispensableness of the contribution it makes to mind and heart, so huge a difference in rank will not seem to obtain after all between Tennyson and Meredith. The great technical dexterity of the former brings almost his entire production to a certain level of merit; yet the real masterpieces are none too numerous. Meredith can claim a dozen or at most a score of masterpieces, and the remainder of his verse is deficient in that artistic perfection without which the best thought and passion will not, however inter-

esting in themselves, constitute great poetry. To him who dispenses relative praise then by the amount of good work, Tennyson is a great and Meredith a minor poet. To him who considers only the very best work of either,—which must be a part, forever, in any anthology of English poetry, —Meredith appears to be quite the peer of Tennyson and Browning; and, because of the exceeding rarity and preciousness of his best work, safely along with them in the number of England's greater poets. The reason why Tennyson was almost immediately accepted, Browning only after a long struggle, and Meredith hardly as yet to-day, lies in their several degrees of individual originality, and independence from familiar models of poetic method and style. Whoever loved Keats, Shelley, Coleridge and Wordsworth, was prepared to enjoy Tennyson. He recognized, at sight, common and therefore familiar elements. Seeking precedents for Browning, one must go back at least to Sidney, John Donne, Ben Jonson, George Herbert, Francis Quarles, and Shakespeare in his passages of reasoned passion and passionate metaphysic. Arnold's poetry had the authority of Goethe, Leopardi, and Heine, besides the precedents of Sophocles, Wordsworth, Byron, and Keats. Nevertheless, he had to abide patiently his turn. Our forefathers were obliged to learn the "great language" of Wordsworth as if it had been a foreign tongue. No wonder then we have seen the appreciation of Meredith grow but slowly, and the rec-

ognition of his great merit uttered with cautious, nay timorous reserve. Hence, too, the justification of critical studies and popular handbooks, which assist the beginner to get his bearings ere his courage fail or his strength be prematurely exhausted. Mr. Richard le Gallienne[1] and Mr. George Macaulay Trevelyan[2] seem to have done their pioneering well; particularly the latter. Mrs. Henderson[3] betrays a little amusing irritation with the public's natural preference for Meredith's more obvious and sensational work; but in the main she does honest, if not brilliant service. As for Mr. Basil de Lelincourt, whose aid Mrs. Henderson has invoked, one can justly say of him that he appears more solicitous of his own reputation as connoisseur and wine-taster to god Apollo than of the presentation and espousal of his cause.

Now it ought to be obvious, a universally accepted truism, that all criticism which consists in the application of formal principles got by induction from previously examined literature, must beg the question adversely in the case of productions anywise novel in form. To the extent naturally enough of his æsthetic innovations in the structure and style of his novels, or in the manner of his poetic conception and utterance, academic criticism governed by precedents, and deficient in sympathetic audacity; beholding art so to say from

[1] Richard le Gallienne. George Meredith: Some of his Characteristics. 1900.

[2] George Macaulay Trevelyan. The Poetry and Philosophy of George Meredith.

[3] Mrs. M. Sturge Henderson and Mr. Basil de Lelincourt. George Meredith: Novelist, Poet, Reformer.

the consumer's rather than from the producer's viewpoint; cannot but judicially condemn, or defer at least any award of unmitigated praise to a more convenient season, after the death of all persons concerned. True, our poet has entered into the beyond; but the set standard still lives that condemns *a priori,* and no great generally acknowedged poet is now left to speak brave words in his behalf. To attempt an estimate is not so likely to be profitable at present, as to offer an appreciation. Hence Mr. Trevelyan seems so much better a guide to the student of Meredith's poems than Mr. Basil de Lelincourt. The former has the divination of sympathy, the audacity of enthusiasm, and the sanity of one who would keep a good conscience always, but would err, if err he must (and who doth not?) on the affirmative side. Who is there will dare predict to what extent the greater mental agility of future generations will reduce the much-advertised difficulties of George Meredith's style? The suggestive fact remains that to those who have long loved their Meredith, such poems even as a "Faith on Trial" and the "Thrush in February" begin to justify themselves poetically. Old readers would not now want a greater clearness at the expense of the inherent vital energy; more rhythm, lilt, or verbal charm, if thereby the spiritual suggestiveness were in any degree lessened.

In other words, a process of assimilation goes on between readers and poet. Who to-day among

lovers of poetry finds the "Dark Tower" of Browning unapproachable, or his "Nympholeptos" a metaphysical rebus? So, it is not yet time, till sympathetic advocacy has done its part in assisting the process of assimilation, to close definitely the inventory of our poet's masterpieces, because of our own personal insusceptibility to the charm of the remainder. At all events, "Love in a Valley", "The Romance of Youth", and "Modern Love", the tragedy of adult disillusion; "Hard Weather" and "South Wester", as interpretations of the hostile and gracious aspects of Nature; "The Woods of Westerman" and the "Lark Ascending", as the lyric praise of natural faith and human selfishness; "Melampus", lauding the good physician because of his abounding love, and the "Hymn to Color", setting forth the mystic oneness of life and death; the "Day of the Daughter of Hades", singing the mystery of life as twin mystery to that of death, and the "Woodsman and Echo", an almost too onomatopœic Tyrtæan rhyme, persuading to a courageous setting-aside of the present which belongs to us, for the better future's sake, that shall belong to others; and its fairer fellow, "Woodland Peace",—not to forget the grim and eloquent tolling of the "Nuptials of Attila",—these at least constitute a list of things no reader who has come to know them at all, could afford not to reread from time to time, for their combined ethical, intellectual, and æsthetic spell. So much without suspicion of ove-

excited advocacy may be affirmed, and cannot easily be denied.

In conclusion, let the "Song in the Songless" bear testimony to the tremendous suggestive power of Meredith at his best. The modern materialists, wrapping their omniscience in the respectable robe of agnosticism, have performed a marvelous feat. First they have abstracted man from the Universe, and scrutinized the remnant closely, assuming all the while that they had got out of it themselves, and really were beholding the world as it would be if man were not. So having reduced all but man to mass and motion, they turn about upon man in turn, and explain him in terms of that world supposedly construed without him. That the whole procedure is reliable, who shall contend? To Meredith, as to all poets, mystics and philosophic idealists, it appears a quite illegitimate procedure. What prestidigitation to no effect! Our logic may be flawless, but have we played fair with the premises?

"They have no song, the sedges dry,
And still they sing. . . ."

It is no meaningless, soulless sound; it is song, articulate, melodiously human. For after all, the sedges and I are akin.

"It is within my breast they sing,
As I pass by."

If another hears no song, only senseless sound, it may be, no doubt, due to the nature of the hearer, ɔever he be; of course, all meaning must be

subjectively recreated, and for the deaf there is no sound, and for the unmusical no song.

"Within my breast they touch a string,—
They wake a sigh."

Yes, frankly, it is in me,—the meaning and the human value of the meaning,—but were we not akin somehow, they could not elicit any such response.

"There is but sound of sedges dry."

Apart from the co-operation of my soul, to be sure, there are only vibrations of the ether; it is

"In me, they sing."

But on the other hand what occurs in me is no spontaneous activity of my own. It is consciously a response to their initiative. They after all it is who sing, although it be only in me they should so sing. Man and Nature are one. As expressed elsewhere by our poet with immediate reference to the stars:

"The fire is in them whereof we are born,"
"We,
To them are everlastingly allied."

Any view of Nature by man from which he has illegitimately excluded man, must be untrue, and an offence to the Life of Man. Therefore, Meredith, in reply to materialistic dogmatizing, lilts his little lay of Humanism:

"They have no song, the sedges dry,
And still they sing.
It is within my breast they sing
As I pass by.
Within my breast they touch a string,
They wake a sigh;
There is but sound of sedges dry—
In me they sing."

SEWANEE, June 25, 1909.

WILLIAM BLAKE—POET AND ARTIST.*

To write popularly of a man who has remained obscure to the general reading public for threescore years and ten since his death were not a mean achievement. By an instinct no host of critics with battle-axes of opprobrium can withstand, the public presses forward into its promised country. Some leader bids the sun stop in midheaven while the critics are being routed in fine style. What we want comes to us. We are drawn to what we want. We may not know what we want, it may not know we shall want it, but apparently there *is* that knows; the conjunction takes place. With due juxtaposition a sort of occult chemical process soon disposes of wanted and wanter, and you shall have, whether you will or no, a new compound. The public finds a Browning-poet, and the result is, a public that wants—say, a Meredith-novelist; or, put it *vice versa*. At all events, having found either of these men, with their wondrous work, the public will never be the same

*These two papers were written, and appeared as a Review of the Ellis and Yeats' Edition of William Blake's works, published by Quaritch, and are reprinted for what they endeavored to be: a sympathetic impression and exposition assuming with Blake the subjective truth of his psychopathic experience analogous to those of all religious originators and renovators. Since the Ellis and Yeats Edition, the most important publication is the Variorum Edition of The Poetical Works of William Blake, edited by John Sampson. The Clarendon Press. A lovely reprint of the Songs of Innocence and of Experience, Alderbrink Press, Chicago.

again. And as for the works of Browning and Meredith—to be found by the public, involves for them a change also, not exactly a beautiful "sea-change," either! What is absorbed into the common consciousness becomes commonplace. Is there anything more repulsive than the truism uttered with oracular pomp, as though yet likely to shock us with novelty? Who knows how much of what we deem true gold in the ore of Browning and Meredith may not come to seem dross? It is the unassimilable that alone remains the same for all our gastric enterprise. And, so, perhaps, the didactic elements we now so eagerly absorb will be pardonable only for the sake of what goes along with them, which will remain new to future generations, and which, teasing them out of thought, will yet have a flavor the palate has not been cloyed with; or, maybe, the message will be forgiven for the sake of the obtrusive style—the very thing we are all but unanimous in barely condoning.

Now, if, after a hundred years, the public has not found a book, and copies have become precious to bibliophiles, who revel solely in books that must by no means be read in order to serve sublimer ends, as a species of masculine bric-a-brac, if such has been the deplorable doom of a book, it were hardly of much use to attempt its popularization by writing popularly about it. You may get a hearing; it will not. Still there are now and then exceptions to every rule.

Blake's works were not published as a whole till six years ago.[1] Before then we had selections. Oh! the damnation of being known by tidbits! the double damnation of being known through "picturesque literature" of dilettante litterateurs! the treble damnation of being bruited abroad as a posthumous genius, half mad or wholly so, embalmed in anecdotes, spirited away by critics, praised as unintelligible, patronized, carefully doctored by editors, schooled in one's art, shown where one did decidedly amiss, where one might have done better, perhaps, and what by all means to do in the future should one be courageous enough to try again, and all this when one has been dead from two-score to three-score years and ten. Poor Blake! Do not number me among your stabbers, right-handed or left-handed. Call me a foolish lover who is not ashamed of his devotion, and is quite ready to admit that the chief reason he loves you so much is that you have hitherto baffled him and promise to do so for quite a while to come. Who can love what he can account for, critically set apart, and then with prosaic glue of a guarded commendation knit tightly together again? You can treat your chairs and your tables so if your carpenter's cunning be sufficient; but your friends, your flaming leaders, your martyrs of the spirit, never! For them devout enthusiasm and worship. Nothing but what is at least right reverently agnostic! If you presume to expound,

[1]Even then at the unpopular price, "net $25.00!"

it must be with much the feeling of him who fought with beasts at Ephesus.

> Some people admire the work of a fool,
> For it's sure to keep your judgment cool.
> It doesn't reproach you with want of wit;
> It is not like a lawyer serving a writ.

So much for those of you who don't care about the Blakes of this world! No doubt, of course, you keep "cool" what "judgment" you have, not to say just a wee bit icy; and as for your "want of wit", you shall be blissfully ignorant thereof till the crack of doom.

I know there are those who, of another class from the delectable persons addressed in Blake's doggerel epigram (in which, gentle reader, I have only included you for rhetorical effect)—yes, there are those who pretend to understand the incomprehensible, who put on an owly stare of wonderment at our stupidity, and think they delude us into supposing the wise of all the ages have given them a knowing wink, as much as to say, "You, too, are of us." But of such I will boldly affirm that they never impose on any but themselves—and their like. Of these I honestly believe are few among Blake's admirers. Some, no doubt, but I repeat it, few. To understand the prophet Ezekiel may be to one's credit, and worth a little schooling in stage art, grimaces before a cracked looking-glass, and a year's bruises to attain the proper grace in falling. To understand Blake has not yet become a sign of intellectual superiority. Among his admirers and his expounders there

are, at all events, no hypocrites, unless the gods, to ruin them, have verily made them mad.

One of the reasons so many have come to Blake from the four quarters of the earth and interpreted him so diversely is, that if he put glass over darkness a man must behold his own face, do he what he please. Nor will he behold it darkly. But, forgetting straightway what manner of man he is, he will stoutly declare, "It is Blake," when honestly he should have cried, "It is I!"

Who has read Mr. Gilchrist's beautiful biography and not enjoyed it? To be sure, Messrs. Ellis and Yeats have demonstrated beyond a doubt that Blake, when he parted company with the Swedish sage and his first biographer, was not so mad as the latter's great book would insinuate. We are never over just to heretics; and the newer our doctrine the fiercer the fury we visit on apostates. Even so mild, so sweet, so just a man as Mr. Alexander Gilchrist could create false impressions by skilful omissions of words necessary to the sense. Take, for instance, the case of Blake's being misquoted from Crabb Robinson's Diary, saying that "Christ took much after his mother,"[1] when he actually said that He "took much after his mother, the Law," as his last editors have shown us.[2] This is one of many alterations by suppression. Yet there have been shown to be not a few altera-

[1] Life of William Blake, "pictor ignotus" by Alexander Gilchrist, Vol. I., p. 354. (1863.)

[2] The works of William Blake, edited by E. J. Ellis and W. B. Yeats, Vol. I., p. 148, Quaritch, London, 1893.

tions by substitution of words. Surely, not a critical way of proceeding! It may be that Gilchrist saw no difference between the readings referred to above. Perhaps he thought that Christ's mother was so obviously not Mary, but the Law, that the latter words produced a tautological effect! What Blake actually said amounts to a statement that too much Judaism had survived in Christianity; that its Founder, as teacher, was toward the Mosaic doctrine, *his* was to fulfill and replace (and whose child it might in poetic language be very properly called), far too gentle, and conservatively tender. Quite another thing from suggesting that his maternal heredity was bad! Yet when you have read New Church Publications, in which the God-man's double psychology is carefully accounted for by a double heritage, due to an anomalous conception, Mr. Gilchrist's reason as a new churchman for the omission is clear. As for Frederick Tatham, the Irvingite Angel, his interpretations were drastic. What ages did the pious man spend poking the heretical piles of Blakean manuscripts as they curled, blackened, and burned in his inquisitorial grate. One thing is certain, we can never be sure he was wrong, or expose his uncritical misinterpretations, so thorough did he make his commentary, thanks to orthodox heat and the omnipresent egotistic oxygen.

Hardly less respectful or scholarly were the two brothers, of whom to speak otherwise than gratefully as students of Blake were ungenerous, yet

whom it is not dishonest to censure as Blake's latest editors have done. Let us be honest first, and then generous. To take finished poems that seem obscure, and, by playing a patient chess-game with the stanzas, make poems that suit one's fancy better, being capable of a pretty interpretation quite modern and germane to one's peculiar thinking, is reprehensible enough, even though the proceeding be inspired by misguided enthusiasm. But then, if one believes in a "mad chink of Blake's mind,"[1] it is, of course, easier to dispose of what one does not like or understand. Much trouble and ingenuity is spared. One can then praise warmly, and one's warmth will do one's magnanimity credit, while saving one's critical faculty from any charges of aberration. Not that we have not much to enjoy in Mr. W. M. Rossetti's biographical sketch and critique, and in his great poet-brother's selection of poems for the second volume of Gilchrist's posthumously published biography of Blake. Still one must object in the name of fairness to the high-handed fashion of his reckless improvement of the original. Against any such event as a really sympathetic critique that should "piece together" the "myths, trace their connection, reason out their system," and declare the works "at the end of the process, altogether right and fine, or even absolutely free from a tinge of something other than sanity," against such an enterprise as that of Messrs. Ellis

[1] Prefatory Memoir to W. M. Rossetti's edition of *The Poetical Works of William Blake* (1874) (Aldine Edition), pp. xxxviii-xc.

and Yeats, Mr. Rossetti armed himself beforehand, it would seem, in the chain mail of a prejudgment.[1] Such editors would have arrived at a conclusion different from *his!* A consummation devoutly to be wished, some years ago, and now to be grateful for with proportionate devoutness.

Professed finders of the "key" (like Faust's, that takes one to the Mothers of awful name), Messrs. Ellis and Yeats have, at all events, turned it in the lock back and forth and made it lift the wards; they have not first picked the lock and then pretended to use their key with preternatural ease. Besides, we have the lock to look at, and take to pieces, and put together again. And the key we can try at our leisure.

It is rather delightful to witness with how much vigor and rigor, with how much righteous indignation, Mr. Story[2] and Dr. Garnett[3] throw away the proffered key. They will have none of it. Except to flourish it in the air while a fine sarcastic smile plays on their countenances, and to exhibit by contrast their own far simpler way of dealing with the obstinate door, they have no use for it. According to them, it would seem that the door consists of many separate pieces, each with its particular hinge and bolt or lock. Those with bolts open, by all means, even should the bolts

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[1](Id.) p. cxxii.

[2]*William Blake, His Life, Character and Genius,* by A. T. Story. Macmillan & Co. 1893.

[3]*William Blake, Painter and Poet.* By Richard Garnett, LL.D. Macmillan & Co., 1895. Published in *The Portfolio,* a very valuable, cheap, and profusely illustrated monograph.

shriek for rust; those with locks settle with the critical sledge-hammer of imputations of insanity or senselessness. In you must. What you do not understand, term wild and inane. In Crabb Robinson fashion, though with much superior intelligence, far greater sympathy, "*their* want of wit" they will ascribe to Blake, and the "lawyer's writ" they will escape by crossing a frontier beyond which the fugitive is safe for lack of a comprehensive treaty of extradition.

Still it were untrue to say that these men have not done, each in his way, well; particularly the learned Doctor. Mr. Story should have, to our mind, been more wary of a weakness for adorning his tale with anecdote. He positively ends in making Blake ridiculous. Think of the solemn-eyed seer impersonating Adam, with Kate for Eve, without the embarrassing fig-leaf skirts, and of the surprised Adam inviting the dumbfounded Mr. Butts in to judge of the dramatic performance! What a tale to tell! And here do we not catch the disease by quoting it? To take the stories, true or untrue, remembered for singular eccentricity, and without the context of usual common sense, from which they rose as the Andes from the sea, leaving the extravagant morsels to pass for samples of the whole career, is certainly unfair treatment of any man, however unintentional the unfairness may have been.

And last, let us turn to Mr. Swinburne. Ah, for once, let me confess, I enjoyed that past-mas-

ter in verbal jugglery. What eloquence! What "sound and fury" in so just a cause! What positive good will! "One-eyed among the blind," Messrs. Ellis and Yeats call him. Had he possessed "two" such eyes there would have been surely nothing left for any one else to discover. At all events, let us earnestly hope he will soon come forth reprinted,[1] leaving the edition now quoted at extravagant prices for rarity's sake to the bibliophile, and giving the lover of English that masterpiece of criticism by a "one-eyed" critic. For Mr. Swinburne does not rave in this instance as of Hugo, or condescend to low language of abuse as in the case of Byron. He maintains a gentle oscillation between enthusiasm and criticism, and the oscillating is done in masterful English. One need not care for Blake to care for Mr. Swinburne's essay; but one will not first care for the latter without afterward respecting the former.[2] One-eyed no doubt he is. He has a wonderful tenderness for Blake's rebellion against law and established order; in Blake's anger at the vaunted virtues of mere abstinence he revels. Hardly, however, does he make us perceive with enough clearness that Blake scorned the lower virtue, born of a slavish sense of duty, only for a far higher, more ethereal virtue, inspired by enthusiasm for the beauty of holiness, quite spontaneous and unconscious, the righteousness (to

[1] The essay may now be had in a new edition.

[2] *William Blake*, A Critical Essay by A. C. Swinburne. John Camden Hotten. London, 1868.

use the Pauline phrase) "not of man," but "of God."

"Translated into crude, practical language, his creed was about this: As long as a man believes all things he may do anything; scepticism (not sin) is alone damnable, being the one thing purely barren and negative; do what you will with your body as long as you refuse it leave to disprove or deny the life inherent in your soul."[1]

Mr. Swinburne fails to remind us that you cannot will to do anything with your body that is impure or selfish, if the life in your soul, that your spiritual faith produces, is such as Blake's. St. Paul was opponent of law and apostle of faith; but his object, quite as much as that of the Pharisee sect he left, was "righteousness." *By faith* it was to be attained really. Faith was the better *means*. The perfect knowledge of the law, he declared, only made a man aware of his sin, his failures to obey it; while perfect faith was not a discoverer merely (nay, perhaps a concealer), but it was instead a gradual remover of sin. It rendered wilful sin impossible. Even Blake's most violent and virulent antinomianism, his most fulgurant rebellion, in the "Marriage of Heaven and Hell", is not a protest against righteousness, but against a mechanical, conscious system of producing it, which usually substitutes a hypocritical "good form" for the Holy Spirit and divine enthusiasm.

[1] Id., p. 96.

Mr. Swinburne gives us a valuable hint when he says:[9] "The one inlet left us for spiritual perception—that, namely, of the senses—is but one and the least of many inlets and channels of communication now destroyed or perverted, * * * a tenet which, once well grasped and digested by the disciple, will further his understanding of Blake more than anything else." Now, the vindicator of other avenues of knowledge than sensation and reasoning about sensation, he most undoubtedly was. He prayed to be delivered from "single vision and Newton's sleep."[10]

> If the sun and moon should doubt,
> They'd immediately go out,[11]

and further,

> This life's five windows of the soul
> Distort the heavens from pole to pole,
> And lead you to believe a lie,
> When you see with not through the eye.[12]

for such a proceeding leads you to imagine the soul insignificant, and material mechanism of immense significance; and surely such

> Humility is only doubt,
> And does the sun and moon blot out.

But to this matter of Mr. Swinburne's one-sided presentation of Blake I shall return later on.

It is well to remember that to vindicate Blake by quotations from the New Testament is fair. He believed himself to be a Christian. He thought

[9] Id., p. 242.

[10] "Los the Terrible"! last line. W. B. Yeats' edition of Blake's Poems, p. 138. Charles Scribner's Sons. New York. 1893.

[11] "Proverbs," id. p. 99.

[12] "The Everlasting Gospel," id. p. 113.

himself a most loyal disciple of the Master. To be sure he threw the prevailing theology to the winds. It was to him profanely unchristian. The doctrine for instance, at its core, of a "vicarious atonement" he denounced as immoral. We have this on unquestionable evidence—the Diary of Mr. Robinson. In such a unique idea of the Christ as should exclude the rest of the race from a potential realization of the same degree of God-consciousness and God-power, he, most evidently, did not believe. Still he did not sympathize in religious matters with his friend, Mr. Thomas Paine, and the rest of the radical men of his day. He thought it better to believe as the common people did, in the divine exclusively in one man, than to believe in the divine in no man. Better yet, of course, it were, according to Blake, to believe in God as the very Self of all. No wonder, however, Mr. Crabb Robinson, orthodox and unspiritual, was shocked, and thought Mr. Blake had an insane fit when he declared Jesus was the only God! yet added [may we infer a pause, significant of different degrees of divine realization?] "and so am I, and so are you!"

Mr. Swinburne's one eye is excellent. The eye he lacked for the task of understanding Blake's message as a whole was the eye of sympathy with the spirit of the New Testament and the mysticism of the Christian centuries; this eye was put out by his own paganism and positivism, so that the Blake he sees is a mere Titan storming the

Olympus of Moral Codes; a hurler of lightning-bolts, clutched from the relaxed hand of a slain Jove, into the stronghold of traditional thinking; a sort of air-clearing thunderstorm of terrific vehemence—leaving a man to obey the spirit—which, unfortunately for lack of the other eye, Mr. Swinburne interprets, not as the Holy One, but as one's own sweet private will!

For the labors of all these men we are deeply in their debt. The student will read them all again and again till he understand them (and in the case of Mr. Swinburne's Essay the task will be no light one), and then, obedient to each, he will forget all the other critics for Blake himself, if not in the complete edition (rather high priced for the proverbial poverty-stricken student and poet lover) at least in Mr. Yeats' beautiful little volume which contains the poems and copious selections from the "Prophetic Books." The *Aldine* edition and such a volume—too cheap to be good—as Mr. Joseph Skipsey's Selections[3] (alas, so far, most of the people I have met read Blake in these only!) he will conscientiously avoid as liable to produce entirely false impressions. He will leave (alas, many who discuss Blake do not!) the selections of Mr. Carr[1] and Mr. Miles[2] to satisfy the undergraduate and the dilet-

[1] *The Poems, with Specimens of the Prose Writings* of William Blake with a prefatory notice by Joseph Skipsey, Walter Scott, London, 1888.

[1] Mr. J. Comyns Carr in Vol. III of *The English Poets*, edited by T. H. Ward. Macmillan & Co.

[2] In *The Poets and Poetry of the Century*, edited by A. H. Miles. Vol. I. Hutchins & Co., London.

tante; though surely the latter should be thanked for giving Blake his mere due, as "anticipating the Lake Poets," and treating him sweetly as well as seriously, even if one may be permitted to smile when he expresses his preference, both for "lyrical gift" as well as for "literary finish," of the "Poetical Sketches" to the poet's maturer works!

Before I plunge deeper into my subject let me remind the reader that I nowise profess to understand fully all the mystical explanations of Messrs. Ellis and Yeats. What it has taken them years and years to write, it may be supposed will take a reader like me years and years and years to understand. I will write merely as one much aided by them, feeling free to appropriate whatever has helped him to enjoy Blake more.

"I dreamt a dream! What can it mean?"

says Blake, as he begins "The Angel."[8] Undoubtedly all his dreams have meaning. Only we must beware of such a slavish interpretation as will claim to have a definite sense for every minute part of every poem. The parallelism between the things of the flesh and the things of the spirit is never so perfect as to permit the construction of a flawless allegory. The poet has the choice to make between perpetual significance, with frequent preposterousness of the tale as tale, and unity, grace, charm in the poem, with occasional lapses from sense. The gold of meaning has to

[8] E. B. Yeats' edition, p. 73.

suffer alloy for the sake of the formal hardness that will fit it to pass current as coin. That there should be meaningless phrases only enhances the delight when one discovers the meaning of the rest; shine is relieved by shade. Besides these meaningless details suggest that no mere meaning is sufficient, that no view of any seer is adequate to the truth. The vaguely vast suggests the illimitable, the indefinite, the infinite; the senseless, what is too much for sense. But with Blake the first thing requisite is to realize that his trope is not simile or metaphor, but symbol. It is not on likeness, picturesque or abstract, that his rhetorical figure is based. It is not because of a common attribute or element that two things are brought together, or substituted for one another. It is because the mutual relations of two sets of objects are the same, that any member of either series is substituted for the corresponding member. To one who read the Bible by the light of the Swedenborgian doctrine of correspondence, a symbolic style was natural. The Lord, Israel, idolatry, punishment for it, atonement; the patriarchal husband who owned his wife, the slave-wife, unfaithfulness, repudiation, reconciliation, constitute unfailing features of Hebrew prophecy. There is no resemblance between the two series, term by term. Is the Lord a married man? Israel a buxom bride? Idolatry wifely infidelity? Punishment for sin ejection from an irate husband's tent? Atonement the settlement of a con-

jugal difficulty to the satisfaction of the husband, and the return to bed and board of a repudiated wife? Yet, manifestly, while there is no sort of resemblance term by term, the relation of the terms in each series is the same as of those in the other. Now it is clear how powerful and familiar a figure is the symbol. Into current language many a one has passed from the Hebrew sacred writings, so that doubtless there are those who fancy it is a simile when we declare "we are all as sheep gone astray!"

Now, of course all was grist to Blake's symbolical mill—the man he knew or heard of, the historical characters he read about, plots in popular tales. Is an event any less fit to be a significant symbol because historical? Shall not Washington be "patriotism!" To say that one has felt democratic and patriotic, is not to speak half so intelligibly as to declare that one has been favored by George Washington with an interview! Why should not London and Canterbury serve as well as Sodom or Babylon, or Jerusalem, provided of course the reader does not take the poet too literally? "Persons served" in Blake's writing "for adjectives and substantives" at the same time, while their actions replaced verbs and their grouping propositions.[1] Now this was not with him a trick of rhetoric. It was native to the style of his writing, because native to the man. He was obliged, as the statuary and the painter are,

[1] Ellis and Yeats' *Memoir*. Blake's Works, Vol. I, p. 114.

to personify all abstracts in order to give them visibility and make them matter for his art. When persons were ready to offer themselves to him, why create imaginary persons? Thus in Blake's writing mythical beings of the substantiality of Ossian's mist-men and women mingle with personages from actual life. Things "happened for an allegory" to him as to St. Paul. Not that they did not happen, only they "happened *for* an allegory," and their having "happened" is quite a secondary consideration by the side of their being pregnant with meaning.

But this manner of thinking in terms of "men," "things," and "events"[2] might pass merely for a strange fantasticalness in the man; the result of a man born to be sculptor or painter writing poetry and art-criticism. We have, however, to deal with another element of his style in his greatest works, that tries the patience of the prosaic reader so successfully as to constitute *the* ordeal that bars him forever from initiation into the Blakean mysteries. His stories are stationary. Time is left out of reckoning. Or, to say the same thing in other terms, there is a recurrence of the similar, with as little consciousness that it might seem tedious as there is in the sea's repeated rumbling upon the beach. He was a born musician. With fine ear and melodic imagination, he would improvise "songs." His last earthly hours

[2]This habit of dealing with contemporaries has led to dangerous misinterpretations, such as those of Rossetti concerning, *e. g.*, the relations of Blake and the poet, Hayley.

were spent "making the rafters ring" (to quote his friend Tatham), with "songs to melodies, both the inspiration of the moment," as Gilchrist has it.[1]

Undoubtedly his method is a good one. Men's stupidity when confronted with a spiritual truth is proverbial. Iteration is not a useless expedient in the class room; and in the world, if the matter be weighty, iteration and reiteration are absolutely necessary would one gain an intelligent hearing. Particularly, should the poet use symbols which are likely to be misapprehended, it is by repetitions with variation (as a melody is treated in a symphonic composition) that we shall be prevented from rushing on with the plot of the tale into the meaningless, where the fancy disports itself like a lion's cub, and be brought back again and again to the theme, our mind kept stationary, so to say, before the actual sense.

This characteristic of his style has affinity to the method of the Hebrew prophets. No chronological, no logical sequence can always be established. A unity of intention is all that we can clearly perceive, which alone is enough to vouch for the sanity of the poet and the worth of his work. In this respect also there is a kinship between Blake's style and Whitman's (though to me, who love both, it seems as if the resemblance of style ceases here, and has been greatly exaggerated); unity of mood is substituted by Whit-

[1] *Gilchrist's Life of Blake*, Vol. I, p. 361.

man for unity of plot, place, and time. The "Mood" acts as does our optical egotism, which arranges all the independent elements of the landscape into an illusory whole ordered with respect to our eye. Suppose, however, that ordering to be unchangeably fixed with respect to one particular point of view—not automatically self-readjusting as in the case of landscape and eye—what chaos would not appear to the man for whom it should be out of focus! No wonder prosaic readers sometimes fancy Blake and Whitman mad.

Yet even this could be to some extent condoned —a certain monotony and recurrence of incident —if the biographers had not quoted contemporary suspicions of lunacy, and thus given such ample evidence for a successful relegation henceforward of all Blake's works to the Bedlam of literature.

He saw visions! *a priori* that condemns him; though one may feel a little uneasy, if one has a bone of consistency in one's body, as to the mental status of the Paul of the third heaven, and of the John of Patmos. If *a priori* it condemns Blake, it condemns them also. One remembers that the master of these "inspired madmen" was publicly railed at by the intellectual aristocracy of his time (not without provocation, to be sure), as "having a devil"—in plain English, as being subject to insane hallucinations and fixed ideas. Of course, Swedenborg because he was a statesman and a practical scientist was sane; but because he

was a prophet was insane; sane and insane at the same time—probably rapid interchanges of both mental conditions like expiration and inspiration of the lungs! Any theory, never so absurd, rather than to any extent accredit his seership! Boehme, without a doubt, was a harmless lunatic. Insanity would not interfere with cobbling. He was not born in apostolic days, nor was he a Hebrew prophet; how, then, could he be both sane and a habitual seer of visions? And the rest of the prophetic fraternity we shall, as sensible men, find cells for, and straight-jackets if there be any indications of incipient prophetic fury! Heavens, how would it fare with Isaiah, First and Second, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the Minor Twelve in our generation! As for the terribly efficacious Elijah who left no literary or any other sort of remains, and Elisha, who got double portion of his master's spirit, what we should do with them had they the bad taste to trouble us, is clearest when left unspoken! Visions? Let us stop to consider.

Not *materializations* of the séance-room, visible and tangible; nor *ghosts* or phantoms vampire-like borrowing vital energy (or, in more acceptable language, subsisting for us only in virtue of disease, excitement, fear), and apparently objective, visible if not tangible; not *hallucinations* like those of drunkard or maniac that seem to be part and parcel of the objective world, taking their place among things and people, of the same

order of reality to all semblance as they, and therefore inspiring terror; but *visions* all the same, obeying the nod of the magician (when he became master of himself), retreating into the caverns of his brain to dwell as babes in limbo, until wanted once more by the seer.

In unmistakable language Blake declared his visions subjective.[1] Yet he believed them to be not *his* creations. Though proceeding from his mind, they were due to "influences set going by the characters of men" of whom he drew his "pictorial opinions," to quote Messrs. Ellis and Yeats.[2] The thought-world is essentially one. Thoughts are men, he was wont to say. To think of Ezekiel is to summon his spirit from the "vasty deep." Not that you and I see Ezekiel. We see nothing at all. If the word brings any image, it is that of a book to most of us unintelligible, tedious, extravagant in style. But Blake *saw Ezekiel,* or rather Blake's "idea of Ezekiel," so much of Ezekiel as Blake was. Blake *saw* the "Ezekiel in Blake!" So it is with us. We do not see our friend, but so much of him as corresponds to our capacity for apprehension. No wonder no man is to us as solid as ourself! We get our whole self and at best a fragment of ourself when we try to get another! The difference between us and Blake is that, accustomed to think in terms of sensible form, he *saw* what we, in his place, should have merely thought. So our relations to our

[1] Cf. Ellis and Yeats' *Works of Blake,* Vol. I, pp. 95-96.
[2] Cf. id. p. 123.

thoughts were in his case objective fellowship with imaginary persons.

Now Blake desired every man to verify his visions, to see for himself. All men, he thought, had the same gift—only they had not cultivated it as he had. The imagination makes "forms more real than living man," to quote Shelley. Of course. For let us again consider. The inventor sits with closed eyes. He sees his machine. Not as you and I should, were his idea to take on iron (for flesh), and deafen the ear, and trouble the eye with gyrating wheels and spinning balls and shuttling rods, until we were giddy. We could then see the outside. The machinist would see all the hidden anatomy, so to say. For him the heart would be pumping the blood visibly. We should have to stop the mechanism to take it apart; dissect the body for science' sake. He can let it live, yet know it; and know it better because he knows its life. Such is the power of vizualization. With most of us it is rudimentary. You lie down in an orchard in spring-tide robe of blossoms, and you behold your first love, snatched back from the grave; no ghost, beautiful, vital. You dare not move, not even in thought, or the vision vanishes. Blake would have summoned the vision, engaged her in conversation, and kissed her for aught I know, all the while in the snowfall of the apple blossoms shaken about him by the wind. Why not, pray? You would if you could. Don't be jealous of him because he can. His "accomplish-

ment" will not interfere with you. Should he even kiss his vision of your first love, it is nothing surely taken from you that was yours; it is the tribute the seen pays to the seer—the tribute rendered cheerfully by the objective world from day to day to the least of us ordinary human creatures for a respectful recognition!

But you and I at our day-dreams—nay our night-dreams—fasting, or after a plentiful meal alike—are the sport of our tricksy visions; so was Blake for a season. In time, however, he asserted his suzerainty over the underlords of the debatable territory; and the visions asked leave to come and go, and appeared and bowed themselves out as courtiers in the royal presence. No trespassing on his work-time was allowed to translunary visitors. Never so ethereal, they had to mind the rules of his daily schedule of duties. But for years he struggled. It was very hard to co-ordinate the two states of consciousness so unlike; to be both seer and recorder or artist at one and the same time; to use the spiritual sense to take in the vision and the carnal to verify what pen or graver or brush had done toward translating it for the spiritually blind, into the language of mortals. But he succeeded so well that doubtless he might ask Helena of Troy to favor him with a three-quarters profile, if he preferred it to her less classic full-face, let us say; and she would have obeyed him with the most bewitching smile, and a flash of acquiescence let loose from under

cloud-white brows that would brand the blue of her eye forever in memory.

But Blake hated "Memory." Not daughters of Memory were the true Muses! unless memory be understood in that transcendental sense of Platonizers, when souls are said to come "trailing clouds of glory" from "heaven" their "home." Memory as the storehouse of sense-knowledge he feared, and therefore hated. If overwhelmed with sensual experience, the spirit could not be free. Faith in unseen spirit might be slain by faith in oft-seen flesh too well remembered. It never occurred to him that the memories (the ghosts, so to say, of old sensations) could have any contributory value, when a new perception was possible to him, better than the old! It is the ancient controversy between the adherents of tradition and dogma, and immediate inspiration; of majority rule and of the Holy Spirit; of the remembered individual past and the imagined general future; of the actual, rather, and of the ideal that is being steadily realized, but is not yet.

Still, it is hardly fair to say that in his art he wilfully ignored the model. He studied his own body and his wife's. Whether Butts saw them or not in the garden bower, we see them again and again on his illumined pages. To say that he hated drawing and painting from the model is one thing; that he hated the knowledge of human anatomy, as *something* that has become *unconscious,* and only serves to

guard the hand of the artist from mechanical error, while not interfering with the freedom of his mental eye, were to say another. That he did not believe Titian or Rubens to be artists as divine as Angelo, Raphael, and Dürer we can grant. That to him to "feel the model" in a painter's work seemed reprehensible, we do not wonder. Look at your model, my artist, if you please, but let her be merely your anatomical text-book, not your artist's bible, comprising all your inspiration between head and heels as between cover and cover; climb hills of meaner sort to practice muscles and joints before you attempt Horeb or Sinai or Pisgah! See your models before you paint your visions. But on the Holy Mount you will have too much to think of things divine, to remember your athletic feats on ordinary hills! Titian and Rubens, Blake thought, painted men and women, and gave mythological names to account for nudity and lascivious attitudes; Angelo, Raphael, and Dürer saw divine beauty, and sought for means in the sensual world whereby to express it in part at least. The "Satanic" twain apotheosized the flesh; the "Christian" three brought heaven down. So he might have put the matter.

But why the "Christian" three? Why speak of "imagination" in the three, and "plagiarism" or "memory" in the twain? Because art is to impress the spiritual on the sensible, to inject the ideal into the actual world, and realize it for men.

Hence to him evangelization and art-work are one calling; Christ and His apostles were the chief of artists.[1] Did they not make spiritual men out of natural men? beautiful characters out of ugly nondescript human material?

> **Shall to produce form out of unshaped stuff**
> **Be Art—and further, to evoke a soul**
> **From form be nothing?**
> **(Browning's "Pippa Passes".)**

Of course not! Art of the highest sort! Blake himself was prophet as well as poet and painter. To sing, to draw, to color, and to preach were kindred ways of doing one and the same thing. But, master of two arts, it was impossible that he should say the same thing simultaneously in text and marginal illumination. Indeed, he never draws out of the text what is there, even when he illustrates the literary works of masters like Dante[2] or Milton. Some measure of faithfulness to their conceptions there must of course be, for those are dictators in two republics of letters. As for Young and Blair, they can be safely left in their literary Hades, while the illustrator ascends the heavens from first to seventh. In his own work, however, it was possible to carry out his theory to the full. The illustrator should give not what the text supplies, but what it does not and can not give. Why play the melody on the instrument when the sing-

[1] Cf. Swinburne's Essay, pp. 86-99 for a wholly un-Blakean vindication of Blake's work from charges of immorality. On the "art for art's sake" heresy, he would have us excuse what as a matter of fact is in need (when understood) of no apology.

[2] Three valuable articles on William Blake and his illustrations to the Divine Comedy have appeared in numbers of the *Savoy* (July—September, 1896,) from the pen of Mr. W. B. Yeats, with illustrations.

er gives it better? Can you not furnish harmonies? Supply allusions, illustrations, comment! Can you not follow out suggestions, develop the latent? Run in sympathetic parallel,[2] in brilliant paradoxical contrast? So does the true accompanist. So does the true illustrator. It is nothing against this method that Anne Radcliffe should furnish a suggestion for the Preludium to "Europe, a Prophecy."[3] Surely she may furnish a highwayman, if our national history yields a pictorial symbol for patriotism. All, as we said before, was grist to Blake's symbolic wind-mill. Why *wind*-mill? Well, because we prefer it to water-mill, bad as it is. Wind and water are themselves diverse symbols. The latter signifies instinct, as the former does the affections. Unfortunately for us we have no mill whose mechanism is driven by sunlight; for sunlight signifies with Blake, both brilliancy and heat, the intellect fired by the divine. His mill of symbolism was then not even a *wind*-mill, but, let us venture it, a "*light*-mill."

And so I have stumbled upon Blake's symbolic system such as we know it from his extant works, but I shall reserve what I have to say about it for another paper.

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[2]It is surprising to find in *Vala*, for instance, words descriptive of illustrations to earlier prophetic books, and this not once, but repeatedly. Rather suggestive of the consistent unity of Blake's myth, one might think?

[3]Cf. Swinburne's Essay, pp. 238-239.

WILLIAM BLAKE—MYSTIC.

PART II.

So far as I understand it, Blake's gospel is a purely psychological one. Man is, roughly speaking, constituted of intelligence, affections, instincts, and vital energy; brain, breast, stomach and bones, let us say, though we are not accustomed to assigning the latter twain a pseudo-anatomical abiding place. If there is something wrong with man, it can only be that he lacks other elements, or that the elements he has do not co-operate harmoniously. Perhaps both diagnoses of his dis-"ease" are right. Blake might put it, that man's four constituent elements work ill together because he lacks a fifth. If he could get this fifth, the other four would so co-operate as to be one—no longer distinguishable. The machine has parts, the organism members. If we have parts, it is because we lack the organizing principle. The organizing principle is the consciousness (perpetual, normal, serene) of God. The ideal man does not, according to Blake, think, feel, become aware of unintelligent prompting, bid his body do this or that. He does not distinguish truth, because he knows nought false; he does not distinguish good because he knows no evil; he does not distinguish beauty, because he knows no ugliness; he simply

is truth, good, beauty; they are his attributes; he knows them directly as himself. To "understand" involves contrast, discord. One has to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good *and* of evil to have a conscious morality or a conscience. The perfect man has no conscience. He has knowledge of God as his Self; knowledge of himself as God's. Even between himself and God the distinction is due to his own incomplete development only, to his partial realization as yet of God. When he is perfected, he will not *distinguish* God. The time will have come of which St. Paul writes, when God shall be all in all.[1] He will *be* Him. His last properly human word will be a "declaration" not of human dependence or devilish self-dependence, but of a conscious divine identity. Blake, in a word, is a *Mystic.*

The ideal man is given visions of ideals. His intelligence is crystal-clear. It obtrudes none of its substance between the visions and the rest of the man. It does not assert its existence by refracting the light. It is mere transparency. It is self-denying.

The light passes through the crystal mind, focussed. A spot of fierce heat falls on the affections. They burst aflame. It is not their heat, but the fire of the beam that ignites them. They are fuel to it. They do not declare themselves independent (as the combustible heart does!) nor

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 28.

do they claim, as planets do, the light for their own. They yield themselves entirely.

The flaming affections, kindled by the transmitted ideal, set the instincts to seething. They do not like polar waters persist in icy self-identity. They bubble, they steam. The cauldron of their sea-bed and topaz sky becomes too clear for the vaporized waters. They are furious for work. And lo! the steam issues—torrential energy develops in the mechanism of the body that awaits it. Not like the self-assertive flesh of the corpse. It is pliant, obedient. Its resistance is for the sake of completer obedience. Inertia becomes momentum. It works. And lo! the ideal finds expression in glorious looks, gestures, words, deeds, and heaven sees itself mirrored on earth! For the looks, gestures, words, deeds, there is no motive that belongs to the *man*. He is inspired. God looks, gesticulates, speaks, acts through him. He is not "moral"; he has no standard of good, no choice to make. The choice was made long ago. He has no righteousness, for he takes no credit, nor will receive any glory of another;[1] at all events he is "not good" nor will he let himself be called good.[2] He is "holy"; that is to say he is God! Not he, but God in him, who worketh in him both to will and to do![3] To God he ascribes the praise if what is miscalled *his "Light"* shine; for it is his, as a lantern might arrogate to itself

[1] John, v 44.
[2] Matt., xix, 17, and Mark, x, 18.
[3] Phil., v. 13, cf. Eph., iii, 20, *et seq.*

its luminousness emitted by the flame; and men, who see him "glorify God" and "his father," not him; and by so doing they rejoice *him* greatly, whose blissful business it is to set forth His glory alone![4]

Such we might say is the ideal man. Such are not we. Why not? Accepting a "fall," let us give a strict psychological account of it. Understanding the "fall," we shall see our way clear to a "rise." All we shall have to do will be to reverse the process.

Now, if as an evolutionist, the word "fall" vexes your spirit, say instead of it "failure to realize intended perfection"—perfection dreamed of by Nature, and towards which she strives. It is anthropomorphic language I will admit, but if you talk of "affinity" and "energy" you are surely not aware of how much more of that sort of language you could consistently endure if you tried! The plan and the building are very discrepant. What a "fall" when you look, for instance, from the completed architect's cathedral to the foundations! Yet that "fall" is the beginning of the real "rise"—of the realization, visible above the vast city some day that wots at present only of her topmost towers of trade!

[4] John, xii, 28, and the entire seventeenth chapter.

II.

Now it is exactly with this whole matter that William Blake deals. Only he deals with it not theologically, but poetically and pictorially. All abstracts are concreted by symbolism. Urizen [your and reason (?)] is intelligence; Luvah [love and ah! (?)] is the affectional man; Tharmas[5] is the sum of our instincts and our sense-nature; Urthona (earthen, with sonorous vowel changes?) is the living body or rather the vital energy of that body—that which constructs, preserves, and controls it—the physical soul if one may so speak.

Now if these four elements of man were functioning as they should, according to the previously indicated ideal method, intellect would be sovereign in man as man, and immediately in touch with God, the poetic genius (as Blake calls Him, meaning to suggest One who makes not, but causes self-making—does not give ideas, but causes men to get them, *i. e.*, inspires[1]). The affections would mediate between intelligence and the instinctive

[5]All sorts of derivations have been suggested by ingenious students. Mythology, biblical nomenclature, Rabbinical lore, Ossian, the Kabbala, Hebrew, Greek and German roots, have been tortured to yield etymologies (*e. g.*) ur and eisen, original iron, is suggested, for Urizen. Ur and Thon, original clay, for Urthonia. Messrs. Ellis and Yeats prefer "luv," Hebrew for heart, to "love" in deriving Luvah. As for Tharmas, no one seems to have made a probable guess. To derive the name from another personage, whose conception was most likely subsequent, seems hardly prudent. Enitharmon from (z)enith and harmon(y) is intelligible; but Tharmas "docked" from Enitharmon is hardly perspicuous, nor is "Thammuz" a convincing etymology.

[1]Cf. "Marriage of Heaven and Hell," W. B. Yeats' Edition, pp. 171-172, and the invaluable (for the student) "There is no Natural Religion." I, pp. 229-230—(the first seven "Principles").

sensational soul; and that again between the affections and the physical energy. These relative offices are personified and named. Not the office makes the man, but the man the office. Therefore the true functions are said to have proceeded or emanated from the respective elements, faculties, or souls of man; and are symbolized by four Titanesses, emanations and rightful spouses respectively of the four lords of human nature. Thus Urizen (a state)[2] is wedded to Ahania (a space); Luvah to Vala; Tharmas to Enion; Urthona to Enitharmon. Here we have, so far, eight personages for a symbolical myth. In terms of them we can state much abstruse psychological doctrine, and never for one minute become unpoetical or unpicturesque. It remains to say that when the man is distraught, the faculties, or souls, and their normal functions are separated, miscoupled, and assume unnatural aspects. If a faculty or soul separates from its emanation or function, they become mutually destructive; the faculty cannot do other work properly, the function cannot be performed properly by another faculty. Adulterous discontent turns into conjugal hatred. Urizen, for instance, becomes a "spectre" and longs for the destruction of Ahania, who is herself no longer an "emanation" but a mere dismal "shadow"—empty; while only in their reunion can either find satisfaction. If the intellect

[2]Messrs. Ellis and Yeats' terminology developing a hint of Blake's; the "state," standing for the "soul"; the "space," for its "function" or relative *position*, so to speak, in the normal man (the divine man).

busies itself exclusively with things of sense denying the spiritual, the spiritual aspiration of the man must perish, or be improperly satisfied with emotional nostrums.

Luvah, the affections, when the intellect, Urizen, refuses to mediate divine ideals and strives to reduce man to a mechanical system—*i. e.*, to rule affections by prohibitions, instincts by their denial, physical energies by ascetic practice—Luvah becomes rebellious, terrible, maniacal. His new unnatural aspect, due to Urizen's unnatural functioning, constitutes another myth-personage: Orc (=rock, or=cor). He is what the affections become under carnal impulsion and rational repression. Urthona similarly becomes Los (=sol, or sun) when viewed as causing the destruction of systems of thought and conduct illegitimately foisted on man by the materialized intellect. The vital energies constantly break through, and hence acquire a protestant, prophetic character.

Remembering further that none of the faculties or souls could possibly act on the others, and cooperate with them, unless it had affinities with all, every lawful couple (soul and emanation) have four sons (elements) with their four daughters (emanations or functions of these sons or elements). This subdivision or filiation might be carried on indefinitely. Again any number of these "sons and daughters" may be at any moment regarded, from some particular point of view, collectively, and the synthesis personified,

and the person newly named. Of such a nature are Urizen's daughters Ona, Elith and Uvith, according to Messrs. Ellis and Yeats. Mnetha, the ancient mother, is such a collective personage for all the four souls and their emanations; Har (Adam) for Urizen and Ahania, Luvah and Vala; Heva (Eve) for Tharmas and Enion, Urthona and Enitharmon. But into the intricacies of what Messrs. Ellis and Yeats, after the most patient investigation and sympathetic reconstruction, believe to be the genealogical tree of Blake's myth-deities, we cannot now penetrate. Let the interested reader purchase or borrow their voluminous work and study the matter out for himself.

Now, of course, Blake's personages must inhabit a world of some sort. On no little earth of canal and cabbage-field, commercial city and seaside resort, do they live, and move, and have their being. Still, it is an earth much *like* ours. The continents are there at all events. But all is charged with meaning. The sunrise shall speak of Luvah; and let what happen to Luvah (or Orc) and Vala, the East stands fast as the region of their rightful habitation. The sun at noon, the zenith, the south, towards which the summer sun inclines, are Urizen's in his primal power. If the conscious life begins with the affections, is at full in the inspired intellect, it is last traceable in our instincts and sensations. There we enter through a region of twilight the hemisphere of the unconscious dark. So in the sunset and the West

is the home of Tharmas, from England, as point of view, the Oceanic world; while Urthona possesses midnight, the nadir when the sun is in the zenith, the north towards which the sun, when impotent in winter-time, inclines. It is quite noticeable that the life of inspiration, so like, because of its trance-like remoteness from the world of sense and sentiment, is never viewed by Blake (as so often in mystical systems), as a "forgetting," a sleep, an unconsciousness, or a death. Only positive terms does Blake employ. To an idealist like him, as to Shelley (on whom his mantle fell from the fire-chariot, all unconscious though Shelley was of the spiritual inheritance), unconsciousness were annihilation; and it is safer far to speak of an intenser, transcendent consciousness, at the risk of saying what is meaningless to one's audience, than, from excessive zeal for the supersedence of present conditions of soul-life by those compared with which they are as a death, to indulge in expressions so ambiguous as to suggest a Nirvana of non-existence as the goal of evolution.

We have suggested before, in passing, that the sun, fire (light and heat) and the sense of color; air, winds and clouds, and odors; seas, lakes, rivers, wells, and the senses of touch and taste; the solid earth and the sense of hearing, are also respectively assigned as symbolic provinces to Urizen, Luvah, Tharmas, and Urthona as their birthright.

Now, what could not find expression? Vegeta-

tion, of course, belongs to Tharmas. The animals are Urthona's; particularly those that haunt caves and prowl at night, that burrow under ground and dread the day. The animals that love green meadows and full sunshine are on the limits, so to say, of Urthona's animal kingdom towards Tharmas' realm. But Tharmas, lord of waters, has the fishes and the great mammals of the deep on his side of the common frontier. Luvah has the birds of the air. Those like the eagle that eyes the blazing sun, the lark that carols his praises high in rarefied air, are the affections that upsoar and become instinct with celestial intelligence; the nightingale stands for the essential affections, which voice themselves in ecstatic song; the dove that coos monotonously sweet in woodland dense suggests the affections so helpless, so foolish, so tender, which take refuge in instinct; the tame fowls of the barnyard are affections that have been perversely taught to abandon the air, their natural element, to live on refuse and offal, smacking of the mere bodily energy; affections that have degenerated into lusts, nor have even the glory of lust, which, as in lion and tiger, is defiance of limitation, mighty assertion of savage self-dependence. As for the bat, a thing of earth, yet claiming to fly, it might serve to render ghastly clear the lust of mere body that pretends to be an affection, but flits about only in the dusk, when the sun of conscious intelligence has forsaken the east, the zenith, toward the south,

and is speeding into the earth's shadow, the midnight at the nadir, the frore north.

One need only add that the colors have also been divided by Blake among his myth-children. Green and pink are the colors of life; respectively vegetable life, instincts; and human life, imaginative and spiritually minded. Red and yellow, the colors of fire and of warm sunshine, seem to be respectively Orc's and Luvah's, passions and loves. Blue, nearest to darkness of all colors, that of the sky, the illusion that seems to shut us in as denizens of a pitiful world,[1] veiling the face of the universe and its God, belongs to Urthona. White and black, which are not colors at all, are significant of abnormal states of the soul; respectively the intellect that admits no place to love, that lives in the arctic snows, at war with Luvah; and the intellect that loses its intuitive light in the materialism of the sense-life, Urizen at war with Urthona. The color of Urizen redeemed is the golden blaze of the sun, both vivid light and heat.

What could not even you and I write in terms of such a magnificent earth-swallowing hieroglyphic alphabet? What a superb freedom of utterance? What hues of meaning—for which no words do, or ever will exist—cannot be subtly insinuated, so that the myth should defy a rendering altogether into the rigidly abstract, unpoetic, unpictorial dialect of psychology and metaphysic!

[1]Hence his saying "the sky is Satan," and that he had "touched the sky with his stick at the end of a lane."

III.

What are the chief doctrines of Blake? They are readily inferred. But were it not better in an article meant to stimulate curiosity rather than to satisfy, if we said little of a definite sort about Blake's message? Let us give, however, one obvious caution to the student-reader. Do not expect Blake, or anyone, to utter his whole message at once or to keep it before you entire at any moment. One thing at a time, said with all his might; another on another occasion with equal stress of enthusiasm. Each in its turn emphasized by isolation. So all he says must go together. You will often be perplexed by paradox. It is that the truth dwells unutterable, save by symbol, between half-truths. Every thinker, in the dearth of words, has to give peculiar meanings to familiar phrases.[1] Only by thinking his thought, do we come to understand his terminology. Blake's is at all events calculated to stir the imagination, even if its precise intelligible value has not been revealed to you. It never impresses you as a mere cryptic alphabet, because it is always in some manner suggestive, making a primary appeal to the inner senses. There is his advantage over other prophets, unpoetic and unpictorial. Only, it were surely a pity to rest content with this superficial sense. For the fullest

[1] Cf. James Thompson, quoted by W. M. Rossetti, in his Memoir of Blake, pp. cxviii-cxix.

possible enjoyment of Blake one must at least imaginatively (for the nonce) accept his philosophy.

But why is it so difficult to ascertain Blake's meaning? Why such opposite interpretations? Because, as in the case, for instance, of Christian theology, he was wont to assume attitudes in appearance mutually exclusive. "It must be remembered," says Mr. Swinburne, "that Blake uses the current terms of religion, now as types of his own peculiar faith, and now in the sense of ordinary preachers: impugning therefore at one time what at another he will seem to vindicate."[2] But it were fair also to add that Blake was firmly convinced that "his own peculiar faith" *was* the real significance of what the "ordinary preachers" grossly misunderstood. Therefore he felt justified in calling himself a Christian, and justified in being bitterly hostile to the current theology. Having to reckon with the usual corruptions (as he deemed them) of doctrines he as surely deemed divine, Blake felt bound to uphold and tear down; and it was not always possible, not really necessary, to state definitely every time in which sense he was using a theological phrase. Sometimes an epithet would make his sense clear. In "creeping Jesus," as Mr. Swinburne long ago pointed out, we see of course, the sort of "Jesus" men have tried to exalt. Blake abhors him. The

[2] Swinburne, *loc. cit.*, p. 212. *E. g.*, Denier of the vicarious atonement, he yet says: "The death of Jesus set me free," "To Tirzah." W. B. Yeats' edition, p. 84.

Jesus that "takes after his mother, the law"—the hybrid conception of Christianity—a religion that declares the law a curse, yet would judge its adherents by it, rather than by holy enthusiasm and inspiration, the test of apostolic days[1]—he feels duty-bound to oppose with might and main.

> "The vision of Christ that thou dost see
> Is my vision's greatest enemy."

His Christ is the great vindicator of a natural life, who preaches to men to be as lily, as sparrow, as little child, as fruitful tree. Faith in the ideal, and hope of manifesting it in one's final perfection—not self-schooling by a set of laws; forgiveness of sins—not the endless legal or illegal vendetta, which were futile; spontaneous virtue—not artificial righteouness; a life from within outward, seeing that the beginnings be right—not from without inward; the setting of desire on things above—not the dangerous starving and impossible killing of desire; indifference to the letter, when sure of the spirit, to the deed, when sure of the will; the essential unity of man and God—not their everlasting antithesis; the radical goodness therefore (not depravity) of human nature, needing only to draw its sap from its true root to become lovely in appearance; as teacher and demonstrator of such doctrine, as preacher of the sermon on the Mount, and utterer of the great prayer of atonement in the garden of Gethsemane,

[1] Cf. *e. g.*, 1 Ep. St. John, iii, 24, and iv, 13.

the Christ was to him the Saviour, and in a peculiar sense "the very God."

> "If thou humblest thyself thou humblest Me.
> Thou also dwellest in eternity.
> Thou art a man. God is no more.
> Thine own humanity learn to adore;
> For that is My spirit of life."

So said the Father to the would-be humble Jesus; and Blake adds:

> "I was standing by when Jesus died.
> What they called humility, I called pride."

For he saw the sublime arrogance of that humility of the Christ (the humility according to Blake, that Christ would have his disciples learn of him, being humble *as he* was meek and lowly) which, professing to be nothing, professes God Himself to be all of him. Blake hated that false humility which is meant (consciously or not) only to bid God and man heap on us praises which we eagerly want, and pretend not to claim only in order to obtain more plentifully from less zealous hands![1]

How wonderfully Blake did preach! In an article, however, like this, without illustrations, or space for plentiful quotation, his clearest teaching can hardly be indicated.

Vast stalks of wheat droop pitifully, heavy for very fullness of ear, in a graceful S-like curve; two naked women, their backs turned to us, with a fury of motion, daughters of whirlwind, within the loop of the vast stalks, leaping on air, blow out of spiral trumpets great blasts of foul blight,

[1] Cf. Whitman's doctrine of "divine pride" necessary to democracy, and to the highest religion.

which settle about the pendant ears and descend in a liberal fall, hesitant, clinging, defiling, like flakes of pitchy snow.

Can you not understand? The fruit-yielding instincts of humanity, no more erect, snaky in curve because of the hurricane of ill-pent passion, rendered foul and barren by imputations of their inherent sinfulness, that cling to ear and stalk till both rot into the ground!

An old man—hoary hair driven flame-like over his forehead, garments fluttering forward, knees barely able to resist the fury of the wind behind—who peers into the gloom of a vault through a door ajar, fain to take refuge from the storm-black sky, lit only now by lurid cloud-edges; yet afraid of the unexplored mystery, and leaning still, as best he can, on some old staff of tradition. But above, unseen of him, out of the vault, bursting the mason's work, branches a stout tree, with all its suggestions of perpetual self-renewal, birds that build nests of love, and sing the glories of the risen sun!

How clear again. Life out of death—nay death, only life; nor in a sense other—for is not the tree, that has its roots in the grave, like any tree? And further, the reason, a dotard (because he has not sought the beatific vision that constitutes life eternal), may enter the tomb of materialism, but be sure the instincts will spring the arch and get into the perfect day.

Another illumined page shadows vividly the

gruesome condition, at present, of the soul. Around the engraved text, calm below, wind-roughened above, is sea. Below lies outstretched the pitiful corpse of a youth, and snakes wind about the abandoned limbs, and voracious hyenas of the deep grin at it ready to devour. Above, on a rock of the beaten shore, lies a maiden; head and hair and arms hanging lifeless backward; one shining leg still kissed by the salt crests; her breasts lifted shamelessly, poor corpse, appealing to Heaven for pity, while an eagle, with vast sweep of wings to prevent Heaven's eyes filling with tears at the sight, rends greedily with terrible beak her loins.

How suggestive! The intellect, lost in the physical, devoured by lusts that wriggle and writhe on their livid bellies, as they emerge from ooze and slime; and by instincts, ideally intended to obey it, but now masters of it, and its mortal foes. The affections, also dead, resting on the vital-energy (where the instincts, agitated by their own unruly elements, war with them) torn by the sublimest of all, the eagle-affection for the divine, that should be soaring aloft in the heaven of divine imagination. But the intellect is not there, Jove-like, to receive the bird, and therefore it descends to lacerate and glut itself on the dead affections themselves. Prostituted intellect and religious fanaticism battening on the heart! What a terrible two-fold doom!

Father and daughter embracing—white flowing

locks that mingle with golden—both, as it were, released from a prison, and being upcaught to heaven in a luminous cloud, enraptured by their reunion of perfect love. That is it. Let not head find fault with heart, nor heart with head. Let them embrace. Let each resume its function. All will be then forgotten; all will be well with both.

A ram asleep; two naked children, one lying beside it, her face hid in the short grass; the other leaning over the ram, his cheek making a pillow for noon-sleep of its white fleece, shadowed only by his golden hair; over them droops a tree as a weeping willow of the churchyard, not for shadow but for grace; in its branches, birds.

If ever a symbol of sorrow, the tree is that no more. It is the sweet melancholy of perfect drowsihead; and on the branches sit birds singing, to show that what instinctive sadness the pure have, is only a nest-home and song-home for the joys of love and aspiration. Reborn by their mutual forgiveness it is as if old father and daughter had become little children once more. For them, body and sense are pure. In their unconsciousness of self, which is sleep, they confidently lay their heads on dewy grass and woolly ram—and all the while in their dreams the song of their purified being thrills and throbs under the inflow of the divine light and heat that comes to them in their "wise passiveness." Intellect and affections do not have to toil and spin. They have

no anxieties. They are—that is enough. God is. That is their bliss.

Let us take one more illustrated page.

Below, the dragon-snake twists along at furious rate; his great wise head with long heedful ears turned rearward, his eyes looking back to see if his precious freight be safe. Above, a bank of peerless cloud floats, with the new moon and one star. Riding the dragon-snake are a maiden and two children. High above, in the region over the clouds, flies a swan with straining neck and furious sweep of pinion, bestridden by a youth who —between the wings, under his hair, flying in the wind, that seem to beckon as it were to all that is behind to follow—looks back into the traversed spaces.

What should this signify, if not the intellect on the wings of inspiration; affections, instinct, sense, and bodily energy, creeping along in the actual world; both, however, bent for the same goal if by different ways and means; the harmonious operation of the king and the kingdom of man towards the hastening of the "one divine event?"

How do I know this is what these illumined pages actually signify? It is what they signify to me. Other meanings besides they doubtless have. These are at all events such meanings as they have for one who has come to know the main tenets of Blake. For the deeper student they will have more. Blake himself had to study his work

as we, and often no doubt interpreted it with difficulty. We have this on his own admission. He trusted in the law of correspondence; "threefold vision" was usual, "fourfold" not uncommon.

> For double the vision my eyes do see,
> And a double vision is always with me.
> (With my inward eye, 'tis an old man grey;
> With my outward a thistle across the way.)
> . . . . . .
> Now I a four-fold vision see,
> And a four-fold vision is given to me,
> 'Tis four-fold in my supreme delight,
> And three-fold in soft Beulah's night,
> And two-fold always. May God us keep
> From single vision, and Newton's sleep![1]

A threefold sense to his symbols there usually is —one on the plane of human social intercourse, one on the plane of psychology, one on the universal, because as man so the Kosmos. On the divine plane, no doubt, at times there are senses of his myths, glimpsed in utmost glory of his "supreme delight" which eluded even Blake himself. That is the penalty we pay for inspiration. We build better than we *know*. Let us also trust the law of correspondence (law, or theory, or working hypothesis, or poetic fancy—be it what you please to call it!) which is simply the thought of order and symmetry of structure in the whole. All that is, has organic unity; analogies are therefore to be expected; not similarities of beings, and facts, but of the relations of these. If all this be not so in "reality" (as we say), it is at all events a sublime poetic dream; and as

[1] "Los, the Terrible," pp. 136-138, W. B. Yeats' edition.

we would it were indeed realized in actuality (who could help but "wish it true!") let us give Blake love and honor, then, for having realized it in art.

IV.

Having hinted at his message through hazarded interpretations of six pages of his prophetic books, let us close this paper with an attempt at interpreting one of the most accessible but difficult poems of Blake. I shall do this merely with the intention of furnishing an example of the method of procedure, not pretending to give an instance of its indisputable success.

The "Songs of Experience" begin with some manifestly difficult stanzas. I shall furnish the reader with glosses which he is earnestly requested to treat as no part of the authoritative text! Never make Moses responsible for the calculations of an Usher, orthodox arch-bishop though he be, and Irish ecclesiastic to boot!

> Hear the voice of the Bard,
> Who present, past, and future, sees;
> Whose ears have heard
> The Holy Word
> That walked among the ancient trees;
> Calling the lapsèd soul,
> And weeping in the evening dew;
> That might control the starry pole,
> And fallen, fallen light renew!

The Bard (=inspired poet) addresses the earth; not the planet, but collective humanity symbolized by the planet. The bard has the intellect open:

he *sees* not only the present but the past, not only the past but the future; for he understands the cyclic law of development, and apprehends every condition and event in the light of cause and consequence; his *ears* (=sense signifying the life energy of the bodily man) have received the message of that Divine One that is wont to pervade (in the days of human innocency) the instincts and even the sensual life of man; and who calls now through the bard to the "lapsèd soul," which might, if it chose, be master of the flesh (=starry pole—the nadir) and rejoice anew in the old light of inspired intellect. The Bard cries his message, infected instinctively (=the dew) with grief (=weeping) because in sympathy he realizes as his own the woeful obscuration of the intellect (=evening) in the "lapsed soul," of whom he desires to speak to mankind (=the Earth).

O Earth, O Earth, return!
Arise from out the dewy grass!
Night is worn,
And the morn
Rises from the slumberous mass.
Turn away no more;
Why wilt thou turn away?
The starry floor,
The watery shore,
Is given thee till the break of day!

The dominion of the flesh (=night) is all but over; from the carnal man, dormant in instincts (=dewy grass), the intellect (=the sun) is about to burst forth to sovereign inspiration (=the zenith) through the free affections (=East);[1] till when

[1] N. B. the morn..the sun, rising in the east, and mounting toward the zenith.

thou art given, O mankind, thy wholesome bodily energies (=the starry floor, *i. e.*, the sky that is floor of the spiritual temple) and thy yet pure instincts where they border on, and batter against the flesh, perpetually eroding it (=the watery shore) as trustworthy, requiring no reform; and indicating by that which they need to complement them, what the affections and intellect should be, and shall become when the hour of thy illumination has struck (=the break of day).

Let the reader proceed to try the general indications given in this paper (and largely borrowed from Messrs. Ellis and Yeats, who should not, however, be held responsible for any degree of wilful or inevitable misapprehension of their meaning by the present writer) upon such easy poems as the "Little Black Boy," or the "Little Girl Lost and the Little Girl Found"; then upon the longer and more perplexing pieces contained in the complete edition; then let him attempt "Thel," and the Prophetic books.

Now, in conclusion, let me say that the best theory of Blake's system of symbology is that which can deal most successfully without violence, with the greatest number of difficulties. If it be true, as Dr. Garnett would have us think, that Messrs. Ellis and Yeats' labors have been all but in vain,[1] we can only say: "So much the worse for Blake!" For my part I find Dr. Garnett's

[1] A pity that Mr. Story (Essay, p. 158,) who can himself so little interpret as a whole Blake's writings, should feel obliged to reject Messrs. Ellis and Yeats' expository methods!

own account unsatisfactory in the extreme. He thinks Blake did not talk "aimless nonsense *exactly*" (something very near it, though, the Doctor seems to imply); for all there is to be conscious of in his works is "a *general* drift of thought in some *particular* direction which seems to us to offer a *general* affinity to the thought of the Gnostics." Since, however, the doctrine of the Gnostics (as to its intention) is all but unknown; read of mainly in the distortions of hostile refutations; we may judge of the helpful lucidity of Dr. Garnett's suggestion! His criticism of Messrs. Ellis and Yeats' interpretation of Thel is to say the very least captious.

"In understanding Blake's myth, the first thing is to read him through."[2] The second qualification is to be thoroughly in sympathy with Blake's general view—to have mastered by sympathetic study the literature that influenced him. Few of Blake's critics have really shown that they had these two prerequisites for successful independent interpretation. While I myself cannot honestly claim either (for surely "reading him through" means something like "thorough reading"—and "thorough" is an exacting word) I shall hold on to the skirts of the editors who have so valiantly vindicated Blake and given us, from inchoate manuscripts, that incomparable Book of Vala ("which they fondly deem to be now in proper order")[1]—could any one have read it and not

[2] E. and Y. Works of Blake. Vol. I, p. 336.
[1] Wm. Blake, by Dr. R. G., p. 30.

fondly hoped the editor's fond deeming to be just?—of which let the one who would approach the Prophetic Books try the ninth "night" entitled the "Last Judgment," and if it does not raise in him a great tide of enthusiasm (solar or lunar, who cares?) he can safely conclude, I fancy, that for him the poetry of mysticism—poetry that is rhythmic, poetic and pictorial, and yet surcharged with spiritual energy—has no attractions.

With a quotation from it let us end our lucubrations, preparatory we trust, to solid studies.

"If gods combine against Man, setting their dominion above
The Human Form Divine,[2] thrown down from their high station,
In the eternal heavens of Human Imagination, buried beneath
In dark oblivion, with incessant pangs, ages on ages,
In enmity and war first weakened, then in stern repentance,
They must renew their brightness, and their disorganized functions
Again reorganize till they resume the image of the human,
Co-operating in the bliss of many obeying his will,
Servants to the infinite and eternal of the Human Form."

Such does Blake declare, he, the prophet of the "Poetic Genius," to be the final judgment on all religious ideals, dogmas, gods. If they proceed to be enforced for their own sake, are exaggerated for the purpose of making them "strong," they will be cast out by the spiritual imagination of the race, forgotten, till they lose their absoluteness, appeal humbly for a hearing, urged only for the sake of what they can contribute to man's blissful growth towards that type of manhood, "the measure of the stature of the fullness of

[2]Cf. "The Divine Image," in Songs of Innocence. W. B. Yeats' edition, pp. 54-55, and "The Human Abstract," in Songs of Experience. W. B. Yeats' edition, p. 78.

Christ,'' which is what man, when he understands his thought, discovers that he really means all along by "God."

After the superb unrolling of dooms, which are restorations, the "Book of Vala" ends with the noble prophecy.[2]

"Dark religions are departed, and sweet science reigns!"

The science of God, to be sure, not the prostration to a man-made mystery, called mystery because of its incredible senselessness, masked by false reverence:

The good of the land is before you, for mystery is no more.[3]

The science of God, as the goal of human evolution; viz: to know God as one with man, as identical with the eternal man; whom we become day by day if we grow at all, whom to worship is equivalent to hatred for all things unmanly and therefore also ungodly; such was the final vision of the prophet, who passed into the unseen on a chariot of fiery songs in praise of his Maker, in the seventieth year of Swedenborg's New Age, and the 1827th of our Era.

[1]Eph., iv, 13.
[2]Book of Vala. Night ii, ll. 361-370.
[3]Cf. Book of Vala. Night ix, ll. 650-676.

WALT WHITMAN THE POETIC ARTIST.*

No doubt from time to time one meets some natural unspoiled ear that finds the rhythms of Whitman obvious and sufficient. Such an ear is twin sister to a voice, equally natural and unspoiled, and both are obedient to a soul in perfect sympathy with the master. For the majority of the duly sophisticated readers of Whitman, however, who have also been students of the great poets of the past, Whitman's rhythms are somewhat of a mystery, savor of the occult and need comment or suppression by some anti-cruelty society on Pindus. They will have no doubt pondered the lines in Vocalism that declare:

All waits for the right voices;
Where is the practic'd and perfect organ? where is the develop'd soul?
For I see every word utter'd thence has deeper, sweeter, newer sounds impossible on less terms.

No doubt being only sophisticated and afflicted with the fair mind, they will have postponed all criticism of a final sort, out of regard for themselves, desiring to "keep vista" and allow for a little possible development in "soul" and "or-

*This paper appeared in the Conservator (Horace Traubel's organ of Whitmanism) in response to a common request of readers who had pondered my volume on Whitman as an Ethical and Religious Teacher (long since out of print). It aims only to suggest to the classically trained what angle of vision he might adopt towards Whitman for his own greater edification.

gan;" but they have been occasionally not a little impatient, and who knows perhaps even a little skeptical?

It appears to me that a few prefatory words, with which William Blake would fain have persuaded a public—deaf as the proverbial adder to the voice of this and many another charmer—to thank him for his wholly inopportune gift of Jerusalem, are quite suggestive when read by the perplexed student of Whitman's chants:

"When this verse was first dictated to me I considered a *monotonous cadence* like that used by Milton and Shakespeare and all writers of English blank verse, derived from the modern bondage of rhyming, to be a necessary and indispensable part of verse. But I soon found that *in the mouth of a true orator* such monotony was not only awkward, but as much a bondage as rhyme itself. I therefore have produced a *variety in every line* both of cadences and numbers of syllables. Every word and every letter is studied and put into its place: the *terrific numbers* are reserved *for terrific parts,* the mild and gentle for the mild and gentle parts, and *the prosaic for the inferior parts;* ALL ARE NECESSARY TO EACH OTHER."

As we let this little paragraph settle in the mind for a moment or two, we perceive several ideas coming to the surface. The accusation of "monotonous cadence" blasphemously launched against Shakespeare and Milton amounts to noth

ing more than the observation that their rhythm demands a strained, unnatural utterance, such as "a true orator," desiring to give speech its full meaning and full passion, would find awkward, and as serious a bondage as "rhyme." There is, no doubt, a delight in this unnatural utterance, but it is not such delight as is obtained from those living, unconscious rhythms which flow from the mouth of the masterful, ingenuous speaker, causing all to follow him,

> As the water follows the moon, silently, with fluid steps, anywhere about the globe.

Now, it is not a question of better or worse. It is merely a different sort of delight. Shakespeare and Milton strove to compel their thought and passion to obey pre-existing laws of utterance. The repression of their energy gave them, and gives us, a joy of "will," and a sense of "security." Whatever the spirit might intend, a body was prepared for it, apparently from the foundation of the world. The boldest, most dreadful thoughts, the most agonizing or fatal passions, found an aesthetic lord able to keep them in check—a tyrant of rhythm—that would wisely yield them much scope, yet hold its own in the end as vicegerent of the supreme will and pleasure of man. That the tyrant gave them scope, proves not his weakness but rather his sense of abundant power. He played with rebellious thoughts and wrangling passions; he gave them some show of freedom; but he knew himself all

the while to be that fate to which even the gods bow gracefully, and before whom the titans cringe. He left them the foreground of the stage, and smiled from behind the scenes at the uncritical public.

Blake and Whitman, however, do not desire to compel—but to expel. Their inspiration is their absolute and sometimes whimsical lord. They cheerfully yield their souls into his hands. Not compression therefore—there is no independent aesthetic will to exercise any dominion—but expression, is what they desire. Their thought and passion create rhythms that shall not disguise, but reveal them in absolute nakedness; nay, more, that shall set them in the most promulgatory light. The beauty—if beauty there is to be—must be such as the thought and passion inherently possess, or it will exist in the beauty of their unconscious groupings or contests. The unity will be that of despotic inspiration; that which arises in nature everywhere at the fortunate moment, through the triumph of the strongest, the fairest, the proudest. Out of chaos comes cosmos, out of the furious multitude arises the dictator; and when no one theme, no one feeling, produces an organic whole out of conflicting elements, even then there is the one impression, as of the sea, produced by the million waves beating against one shore in the end, affecting the single soul of the reader, and compelled thereby to substantial or dynamic unity.

If the traditional aesthetic procures us the sense of security, a subtle assurance that the will of man is lord over the tumultuous titans of passion and the younger gods of thought, the revolutionary aesthetic gives us the sense of abundant resource, of inexhaustible supply, immortal, victorious thoughts, mutually independent, passions in tyrannous, unsubjugated multitudes. Here we get a glimpse of that abyss yawning between so-called aristocratic and so-called democratic art.

> Have you thought there could be but a single supreme? There can be any number of supremes—one does not countervail another any more than one eye's sight countervails another, or one life countervails another.

Yet there is not chaos after all. For the order which we fancy due to laws imposed from without, is really due to the equilibrium, at each moment, of the contending forces, and stability is but an illusion arising from succession too swift for ocular analysis. To this law of unity we shall again revert.

The rhythms, with what for brevity without suspicion of disparagement, we shall denominate the old aesthetic, must always finally recur to a definite type. In the new aesthetic they acknowledge no type, preexistent, to which they might return. The rhythms are free, picturesque, taking their suggestions afresh every moment, fearless of discords, duly resolving them, allowing for long suspense; yielding a voluntary homage to some leading and especially representative mood

or thought, so that a theme may come again and again, though never unchanged; disporting themselves in wistful or wilful variations on it, teasing with subtle reminders, rendering breathless with impatient suggestions; sometimes abreast with, sometimes lagging behind, sometimes audaciously outspeeding the thought or feeling, like an accompanying light of the eye, or a smile that outlingers its cause, or a gesture that comes quicker than the words. In the fullest sense, to be sure, this description applies only to Whitman's work at its best. Still in Blake there are many premonitions and occasional illustrations of the methods that belong to the "democratic" aesthetic of the Camden sage.

Now the second thought in Blake's quoted paragraph that startles the reader is the announcement that provision must be made for "prosaic" strains to utter the "inferior parts"—because, forsooth, "all are necessary to each other." The "inferior parts" are wanted, if not for themselves, yet to give height to the terrific parts by their flatness. To conceal their inferiority by a sort of rhythmic leveling, or by building up sierras of cloud on the plain, so as to rival the ice mountains on the horizon—were not only a specious fraud, which the reader would detect, and, in our age of "scientific conscience," resent (and who must not resent, now and then, a passage of Shakespearian rant, or occasional hollow boomings and rattlings of phrase in Milton?), but

worse, far worse (aesthetically speaking) it were to lose the power of contrast—the leap of the ecstatic line out of the abyss of prose rhythm, to altitudes where it passed out of the region of the earth's attraction, to fall with accelerated velocity into the sun—a jubilant spiritual energy, that hurries the soul to God.

II.

Whatever his most hostile critic may affirm, fairness will require that he admit how far from indifferent was Whitman to rhythm. Let anyone compare the changes made in such passages of the famous 1855 preface when utilized as "material" for the poems "The Answerer" and "By Blue Ontario's Shore." Sometimes a score of words or so are transferred unchanged—but then they were already far too picturesquely rhythmical for prose. More usually changes commend themselves, whereby concision is obtained and greater musicalness of diction. His perpetual revisions of poems from edition to edition were due to open air tests, declaiming, chanting, nay, singing them, his ear rendered fastidious by long absorption of sunrise and sunset solos of birds, or the orchestral performances of wind in the trees and bushes and grass, or the everlasting sea. "His rhythm and uniformity," to quote his own words (In Re Walt Whitman, p. 16), "he will conceal in the roots of his verse not to be seen of

themselves." In the thought and the passion realized is the secret of the discovery of his "rhythm" and "uniformity." Once think and feel with the poet, be as it were hypnotized by him, and speak out his soul, and the "rhythm" that satisfied the ear of Whitman will delight yours, and the "uniformity" he saw will flash upon your eye like a vision. In fact, when the "roots" are in you, the rhythm and uniformity will, to quote his own words again, "break forth loosely" out of them "as lilacs on a bush" (only give the bush time to grow and bud!) "and take shapes compact as the shapes of melons or chestnuts or pears."

The more abstruse question of Whitman's "uniformity" is not one I feel disposed to write upon now. The analysis of such an easy poem as "Warble for Lilac-time," for instance, will suffice to reveal what is the structural principle of Whitman's poems. He has there set himself the task of celebrating "lilac-time," the "bush" he loves, "with dark green heart-shaped leaves." What will he do? To him the true poem is better than anything he could feign. But the true poem that is his remembered and passionately loved experience is, after all, a piece of untransferable nature. It is not only rooted in definite space, but it refuses to come save at fixed seasons. Besides it comes again and again, here and there. The poet has lived through many lilac times. He has loved many lilac bushes. All these experiences are the concrete material out of which his con-

cepts, "lilac-time," "lilac-bush," are distilled. These extracts, or rather abstracts, are not values themselves. They are mere representatives of value. They are counters for the easier transaction of intellectual business. Whitman's poem on lilac-time and lilac-bush will be not the distillation doubly distilled and beautifully bottled in a fashion that shall gratify the eye, but the imaginative recreation of the concrete experiences whence were abstracted the concepts; the reproduction to the sense almost of the realities whose values they are taken to represent. Prose deals with the abstract tokens of value. Poetry causes us to visualize the values themselves. So the poem of Walt Whitman will give us a list of "things, facts, events, days, qualities," enlarging on some, allowing but one epithet for others, until he will give us the very feeling of springtime, "the restlessness after I know not what"—all in fact that suggests itself to his mind, "exhaustless and copious" almost as nature itself, at the mention of the abstracts "lilac-time," "lilac-bush." The law of order whereby they are strung as "shells" by "children" is not the order of time, or the order of actual experience, or proximity of space, or logical concatenation. It will be the order of "recollection." That is, the order will be neither temporal, local, logical nor biographical, but psychological. By association—that is, resemblance and contrast—along the lines of least mnemonic resistance will a whole be created. He

will pass from the mention of the sparrow to that of swallow and high hole—the golden wings of the latter suggest "sunny haze" that recalls smoke and vapor, and the shimmer of waters through them; the waters, in turn, "all that is jocund and sparkling"—brooks and maple-woods whose leaves twinkle, and make a music like them; from the maples to sugar making, and the crisp February days; from those to the robin, the first songster of the year; through him to the sprouting of trees, and thence to the sprouting of the soul—the wish to be as a bird gliding through the air—nay, as "a ship o'er the water." When the poem is finished you and I have lived through all the springs of Whitman, and we know the meaning, nay, the manifold, physical and spiritual meanings of "lilac-time" and "lilac-bush"; we have concreted the abstracts, we have realized their values, we have had the "true words" that are realities, not signs.

On the same principle are constructed all his poems, more or less, although it must be confessed Walt Whitman, for all his conscious rebellions, protests by far too much, and not so rarely is blithesomely inconsistent, ay, I dread to say it, very conventional and wholesomely old-fashioned. But, where this new structural principle is least obvious there it creates the greatest amazement to its discoverer in the end. When one takes a larger poem, to study out the "uniformity" or vital organic unity, as, for instance, "By Blue Ontario's

Shore," after carefully rereading the materials in the preface (as before suggested for a test of rhythm) one is more than amazed. One is ready to regard the law of composition "concealed" in such a poem as the "Song of Myself" with some degree of reverence. One will not hazard even—without much thought—an absolute "anathema" upon the "catalogues," no matter how long and terrific. One will be inclined to concede to Whitman's biographer (or to Anne Gilchrist and the rest) that they would be delightful to us, if *we had the power* to concrete each concept in turn, for ourself, to get our poet's vision at each verbal suggestion. For most of Whitman's readers, however, the poetic madness is lacking—and to them the catalogues must remain horrible indications of Whitman's stupendous energy of soul and imaginative explosiveness ready to devastate a world of commonplace at a touch from a mere word which to us is perfectly unaggressive, unexciting, nay, as dead as an obsolete term whose obsequies have been duly performed by the lexicographers.

III.

But our modest purpose in this paper is to offer a few suggestions to the bewildered student of Whitman's rhythms.

Rhythm in English verse arises from the arrangement of stressed syllables with respect to one another, and with respect to the unstressed

syllables. If one knows what are the stressed syllables, and reads according to such knowledge, the rhythm becomes audible to the most unerudite and inexpert listeners, the source of a pleasure more or less intense according to his self-abandonment thereto. Now in our language the difficulties in immediately recognizing the stressed syllables (unless the rhythm be very obvious and mechanical) are not always few or easily disposed of at the first reading. Of course in the case of polysyllables the main accent is fixed by use. Yet there are even then not infrequently conflicting usages. The poet may choose the one the reader is not accustomed to, and the reader, ignorant of the fact, may find the rhythm painful to his ear. In a language like ours, spoken over the whole globe, in conflict with other tongues, subjected to the affections of vocal organs by various climates, the varieties of pronunciation are apt to be many. In Rome we do as Rome does. With Whitman we pronounce according to Whitman, not according to Webster, far less, according to Walker.

Further, anyone who has an ear discovers that the same word is liable to diverse pronunciation in the mouth of the same man under the control of different moods or with a different intention. We say "un*known*,"* yet in the line,

By me the hemispheres rounded and tied, the unknown to the known,

*Throughout this paper italics indicate the syllable that has the stress.

the necessity of rendering the antithesis in the words sufficiently emphatic suggests quite unawares to us the pronunciation *un*known, or at least *un-known*. In fact, any syllable of a word may recover its accentual importance if that portion of the meaning of the whole word, which it stands for, is emphasized by thought or passion. Compound words are naturally more liable to such restorations of syllables to their full independent worth, when the elements are both still current as separate words in usual speech, and, for instance, in the first strophe of the second part of "This Compost" occur "apple-buds," "apple-branches," "willow-tree," "mulberry-tree," "he-birds," "she-birds," "new-born," "maize-stalks," "dooryards." The question presents itself at once, shall they all be given only one word accent apiece, or shall both component words receive separate stress, the major stress of course on the distinctive syllables? For my own part, I should give them each two word accents. This I say after reflection and careful experiment. They occur in a series of vernal pictures. There is a delightful superabundance of light syllables, to suggest the "rising" and "laughing" of life. There is a caressing tone in these compound words. Usually "apple" gets the main accent, to distinguish apple trees from pear trees, etc., and apple buds from pear buds. Here, however, the attention is called to the "buds" being on the "trees." Hence, either the usual accent will have to be superseded,

or it will have to be accompanied by another stress:—

The tinge awakes over the willow-tree and the mulberry-tree.

Not, however, over these alone. All trees in turn shall share in the new life. "Trees," therefore, should have a stress as well as "willow" or "mulberry." The same reason applies to "he-birds" and "she-birds." The separate sex function of birds of the same species—the conception of them as one yet twain—demands the double accent. Analogy would settle the case of "maize-stalk" and "dooryard," since appearing together in one verse, as do the other couples of compound words. "New-born" follows the same rule, as it here has the function of a noun—making "born" emphatic—while "new" is the key of the word of the whole strophe. Let us print then the whole strophe, italicizing the stressed syllables for the reader's convenience:

Be*hold this com*post!| be*hold* it *well!*
Per*haps* | *every mite* | has *once form'd part* | of *a sick* person | —*yet* | be*hold.*
The *grass* of *spring* | *covers* the *prairies,*
The *bean bursts* | *noise*lessly through the *mould* | in the *garden,*
The *del*icate *spear* of the *on*ion | *pierces upward,*
The *apple buds* | *cluster together* | on the *apple branches,*
The resur*rec*tion of the *wheat* ap*pears* | with *pale visage* | *out* of its *graves,*
The *tinge awakes* over the *willow-tree* and the *mul*berry-*tree,*
The *he-birds* ca*rol* | *morn*ings and *even*ings | while the *she-birds sit* on their *nests,*
The *young* of *poul*try | *break through* the *hatch'd eggs,*
The *new-born* of *an*imals ap*pear,* | the *calf* is *dropp'd* from the *cow,* | the *colt* from the *mare,*
Out of its little *hill* | *faith*fully *rise* | the po*ta*to's *dark green leaves,*
Out of its *hill* | *rises* the *yel*low *maize-stalk,* | the *li*lacs *bloom* in the *dooryards,*
The *sum*mer *growth* is *in*nocent and dis*dain*ful above *all those strata* of *sour dead.**

*In the above piece an upright bar has marked the rhythmic pauses.

But several points of importance have been taken for granted. When a verb in English has a preposition that is part of its meaning separated from it, it loses its own accent, becomes practically an auxiliary verb, while the preposition does duty as verb. In "to go over to the enemy's camp," evidently "go" has no accent. Should you separate it from its preposition by an adverb, as in "to go immediately over to the enemy's camp," the case with "go" would not be altered. When, however, verbs which are independent in their ordinary use are by the poet treated as compounded with some preposition, they should be so treated by the reader, except that probably the verb will not wholly abdicate its function, nor utterly lose its accent. To "rise out," for instance, in the case of the potato and the maize stalk, is treated as separately accented. To "break through," similarly uttered, makes the rhythm of the line particularly striking, as it corresponds to the "hatch'd eggs," which evidently Whitman was afraid would be pronounced "hatchèd eggs" by some tinkerer of his verse, for he carefully, as usual, eliminated the "e," which he did not want artificially revived. The last two words of the strophe just rhythmically analyzed must come in as two sharp staccato notes. Only then do they answer to the lines in the previous strophes:

Is not *every continent work'd* | over and *over* | with *sour dead?*
Where have you *drawn off* | *all* the *foul liquid* and *meat?* |
I am *sure* I shall *expose* | *some* of the *foul meat.*

In these lines we note a resemblance not merely of topic and words but of harshness, ugliness in the rhythm.

The *sum*mer *growth* is *in*nocent and dis*dain*ful above | *all those strata* of *sour dead.*

The first part of the line by its light syllables is shockingly contrasted with the last ,whose syllables are heavier. But a staccato utterance alone brings out the full force of the disgust and fear, that want to get rid of each word as quickly as possible. Now this at once forces us to consider the matter of other stresses besides the usual word accents of polysyllables and compounds that are semi-independent. In strophe eight of "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" we find ourselves confronted with a line wholly made up of monosyllables:

Now I know what you must have meant as a month since I walk'd

Clearly many ways of uttering these words offer themselves. The logical, the emotional, and the syntactical stresses, according to our understanding and feeling, and parsing of this line, will offer a great variety of rhythmical interpretations. Without discussing discarded readings, let me give my own:

Now I *know what* | *you* must have *meant* | *as* | a *month since* | I *walk'd,*

The poet compares his present knowledge to his former ignorance, *now.*

His knowledge is not mere information, but the fruit of a great personal sorrow: *know.*

The mystery, now known, was long a problem, one that even kept him awake (for *some*thing, | I *know* not *what*, | *kept* me from *sleep*), and receives, therefore, an emotional stress: *what.*

The western star signifies that mystery and, as the following lines indicate, strove to express itself in a most personal way: *you.*

We give no stress to "must," as it does not here mean "compelled," but acts as a mere auxiliary to the verb: *meant.*

"A month since" is an adverbial phrase separating the conjunction "as" from its clause, "I walk'd." In order to make the words intelligible we are obliged to pause after "as," and give it besides a sort of stress so that its full binding force shall be felt at once, creating a rhythmical suspense: hence it gets what I have ventured to term the syntactical stress: *as.*

The rest of our interpretation is obvious. Now this line, as interpreted, is undoubtedly harsh. One may grant it is more significant than such an utterance of it as this:

Now I *know* | what you *must* have *meant* | as a *month since* | I *walk'd.*

The latter is undoubtedly more musical. If it stood alone we should have no hesitancy in settling on it. But the reason we can justify our choice of a harsh, deeply passionate interpretation is not only that it is forced upon us by the meaning and feeling of what follows but that its discords are resolved, and wanted to justify the

resolutions which the poet has provided. Let me give the entire somewhat difficult strophe:

O Western orb | *sailing* the *heaven*,
Now I *know what* | *you* must have *meant as* | a *month since* | I *walk'd*,
As I *walk'd* in *silence* | the trans*parent* *shadowy night*,
As I *saw* you had *some*thing to *tell* | as you *bent* to me | *night after night*, |
As you *droop'd* from the *sky* | *low down* as *if* to my *side* | (while the *other stars* | *all look'd on*,)
As we *wan*der'd to*gether* the *sole*mn *night*, | (for *some*thing | I *know* not *what* | *kept* me from *sleep*,)
As the *night* ad*vanc'd*, | and I *saw* on the *rim* of the *west* | how *full* you *were* of *woe*,
As I *stood* on the *rising ground* in the *breeze* | in the *cool* trans*parent night*,
As I *watch'd* where you *pass'd* | and was *lost* in the *nether*ward *black* of the *night*,
As my *soul* | in its *trouble* dissatisfied | *sank*, as *where* | *you sad orb*,
Con*clu*ded, | *dropt* in the *night*, | and was *gone*.

It is quite noticeable in this strophe that the two parentheses are rhythmically as well as otherwise interruptions. Read the strophe without them and the rhythm would become over monotonous. They suspend the sense, and they suspend similarly the rhythm. Towards the end several lines repeat almost the identical movement, till the last line but one returns to the heavy movement of the second verse and of the first parenthesis, to let the strophe end with the three rhythmic beats of the last verse.

The so-called new aesthetic, as it has no "rhythmic accent" (that is, a syllable otherwise light made heavy, for the nonce, by the exigencies of the verse), recognizes no "rhythmic pauses" which are not also grammatical or rhetorical pauses. When the burden of the thought or feel-

ing is best implied by silence, or the suspense that fears to know at once definitely, or the exhaustion that renders breathless, demand it, a somewhat longer pause will naturally be made. This pause Whitman takes into rhythmic account, as, for instance, in the line already twice quoted:

The *sum*mer *growth* is *in*nocent and dis*dain*ful above | . . . | *all those strata* of *sour dead.*

In "Out in the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," the fifth strophe furnishes another handy instance:

Till | of a *sud*den,
May*be kill'd,* | un*known* to her *mate,*
One fore*noon* | the *she-bird crouch'd* not on her *nest,*
Nor re*turn'd* || that *after*noon || nor the *next,* ||
Nor *ever* ap*pear'd again.*

If, in the last line but one, there be not made special long pauses (indicated by two bars), the strophe will not give the ear a sense of rest at the full stop. All through the bird's song, quoted in this rich poem, pauses are needed.

Soothe! || *soothe!* || *soothe!*
Close on its *wave* | *soothes* the *wave* | be*hind,*
And *again* | an*other* be*hind* | em*bracing* and *lapping,* | *every* one *close,*
But *my* | *love* || *soothes* | not *me,* || not *me.*

Who can fail to appreciate the exquisite melody, verbal and rhythmic, of these lines:

Over the *ster*ile *sands* | and the *fields* be*yond,* | where the *child* | *leaving* his *bed* | *wan*der'd a*lone,* | bare-*head*ed | bare*foot.*
For *more* than *once* | *dim*ly, *down* to the *beach* | *glid*ing |
*Si*lent, | a*void*ing the *moonbeams,* | *blend*ing my*self* with the *shad*ows,
I, with *bare feet,* | a *child,* | the *wind waft*ing my *hair,*

Again:—

*Lis*ten,d | *long* || and *long.*
The *boy* | ec*static,* | with his *bare feet* the *waves,* | with his *hair* the at*mo*sphere *dallying.*

How deliciously does he vary the same refrain-like verses!

From *un*der that *yel*low *half-moon* | *late-risen* | and *swol*len as if with *tears*.
*O un*der that *moon* | where she *droops* | *almost down into* the *sea*. |
The *yel*low *half-moon* | en*larged*, | *sag*ging *down*, | *droop*ing, | the *face* of the *sea almost touch*ing.

Let me transcribe the closing portion of the poem as a help to the troubled reader in weighing the value of these suggestions towards an appreciation of the technique of Whitman. Surely, if ever a poem in its entirety will attest his genius as rhythmist, even to the beginner, it is this poem (unless, perhaps, he prefer the "Prayer of Columbus," which is equally marvelous in its simple and affecting modulations).

*De*mon or *bird!* | (*said* the *boy's soul*,)
Is it in*deed* | to*ward* your *mate* | you *sing?* | *or* is it *real*ly to *me?*
For *I*, || that *was* a *child*, | my *tongue's use sleeping*, || *now* I have *heard* you,
Now | in a *mo*ment I *know* | *what* I am *for*, | I a*wake*, ||
And al*ready* a *thou*sand *sing*ers, | a *thou*sand *songs*, | *clear*er *loud*er | and more *sor*rowful than *yours*,
A *thou*sand *war*bling *ech*oes | have *start*ed to *life* with*in* me, | *nev*er to *die*.

*O you sing*er | *sol*itary, | *sing*ing by your*self*, | pro*ject*ing *me*, |
*O sol*itary *me* | *lis*tening || *nev*er *more* shall I *cease* per*pet*uating *you*,
*Nev*er *more* shall I es*cape*, | *nev*er *more* the re*ver*berations,
*Nev*er *more* the *cries* | of un*sat*isfied *love* | be *ab*sent from *me*,
*Nev*er a*gain* | *leave* me to *be* | the *peace*ful *child* I *was* | be*fore what there* || in the *night*,
By the *sea* | *un*der the *yel*low and *sag*ging *moon*,
The *mes*senger *there* | a*rous'd* || the *fire*, || the *sweet hell* with*in*, |
The *unknown want*, | the *des*tiny of *me*.

O *give* me the *clew!* | (it *lurks* in the *night here some*where,)
O if I am to *have* so *much*, || *let* me have *more!*

A *word then*, | (for I *will con*quer it,)
The *word* | *fi*nal, | su*per*ior to *all*,
*Sub*tle, | sent *up* || —what *is* it?—|| I *lis*ten; |
Are *you whis*pering *it*, | and *have* been *all* the *time*, | you *sea-waves?*
Is *that it* | from your *liq*uid *rims* | and *wet sands?*|

Whereto answering, | the *sea*,
Delaying *not*, | hurrying *not*, |
Whisper'd me *through* the *night*, | and very *plainly* before *day break*,
Lisp'd to me the *low* and delicious *word* || *death*,
And *again* || *death*, | *death*, || *death*, | *death*, |
Hissing melodious, | *neither* like the *bird* | *nor* like my *aroused child's heart*,
But *edging near*, | as privately for *me* | rustling at my *feet*,
Creeping thence | *steadily* | *up* to my *ear* | and *laving* me *softly* | *all* over,
Death, | *death*, || *death*, | *death*, || *death*. |

Which || I *do* not forget,
But *fuse* the *song* | of my *dusky demon* and *brother*,
That he *sang* to *me* | in the *moonlight* | on *Paumanok's gray beach*,
With the *thousand responsive songs* | at random,
My *own songs* | awaked from that *hour*,
And *with* them the *key*, | the *word* | *up* from the *waves*, |
The *word* | of the *sweetest song* and *all songs*,
That *strong* and delicious *word* | *which*, | *creeping* to my *feet*,
(*Or* | like some *old crone* | *rocking* the *cradle* | *swathed* in *sweet garments*, | *bending aside*,)
The *sea whispered* me.

I conceive it to be quite probable that I should not have given Whitman's own utterance in the case of some words in the quoted portions. If so, my experience with "Leaves of Grass" will force me to say that I have not caught his meaning or his feeling to the full, and have also sacrificed rhythmic pleasure by my ignorant mistake. For of course the only test of correctness in any reader's rhythmic interpretation of Walt Whitman will be that, besides satisfying the ear, the meaning and feeling are brought out to the full. I am not going to institute comparisons between the "old" *aristocratic* aesthetic of Shakespeare and Milton and the "new" *democratic* aesthetic of Blake and Whitman. Some of us are content to enjoy both, and this guilelessly and making no apology

to such as can only get joy after the New Olympian Academy have issued a license, duly stamped by the Zeus of tomorrow. Let the lover of Tennyson then beware lest he deprive himself of some part of his legitimate birthright by his doctrinaire refusals to respond to Whitman's really potent spells. And, let the lover of Whitman at his best cease from bringing undeserved ridicule upon his master by odiously extravagant comparisons. Whitman himself enjoyed Tennyson's work as much as any man of his generation. Yet Whitman believed in himself, and his work was his very life, and he did not hesitate to speak boldly and to write on behalf of his aesthetic ideals.

TWO CONTEMPORARY MYSTICS.

MYSTICISM, in its good sense, is an attempt to realize the unknown. Passing beyond the facts and their classification into the realm of pure theory, one then returns and utters in language of the feelings what the abstract ideas vaguely apprehended may import for man and his immediate life.

There are two motives that lead a man to consider the unknown. Either what he knows is dear to him, and, perceiving its end, he craves to know it once again. Enjoyment has only fanned the flame of desire. He hopes the apparent end is but a new beginning. He dreams of what he believes may have begun as in some sense akin to what ended. Or, profoundly discouraged and nauseated, yet not desperate enough to be satisfied with any doctrine of annihilation, he looks forward to another and different world of which he constructs a picture to the imagination in a series of denials of all that this world seems. Mystics accordingly fall into two classes. We have of late received two studies of death from different pens. Both authors have been spiritually nurtured by Christianity. Both declare their debt on every page. One is a pessimist; the other, an optimist.*

I.

MAURICE MAETERLINCK'S "TRÈSOR DES HUMBLES"*

Few books are more easy to read and more difficult to analyze than Maurice Maeterlinck's "Trèsor des Humbles." The elusiveness, easy meandering, and graceful discontinuity of the style, is in the original sense of the word truly amazing. Many readings and broodings are necessary before the mind wins that inner certitude of having comprehended the author's design. Still we have a guide in the very structure of the book. We can obtain, besides, a commentary from his poems and dramas. Out of these, namely, it would be easy work to make excerpts which should present the reader with another version of "Le Trèsor des Humbles."

The dramas are discovered to be only opportunities for giving a personal utterance to favorite psychological observations, and to such theories as they might be fancied to support. He has attempted the creation of what he calls himself

*Since the appearance of this paper other volumes of prose by Maeterlinck have appeared and been translated. The popularity of the author in America is to be approved. We have enough latent Puritanism not to be relaxed by the Belgian, even if as Coventry Patmore cleverly puts it, most of your exoteric mysticism tends to its ultimate expression in "conscientious wenching." Having enjoyed Maeterlinck, both as dramatist and essayist, I may add that none of his later books ("Wisdom and Destiny," "The Buried Temple," "The Double Garden," "The Life of the Bee," "Our Friend the Dog," "The Pleasure of the Hours")—while varying the mode of expression, offer any change in philosophic viewpoint. The socialistic suggestions of the "Life of the Bee" were probably more in the material than in the charming author's intention.

a "statical theater" (p. 188).[1] His poems entitled "Les Serres Chaudes" (Hot Houses) utter a sense of tedium, a languid remorse, a fearful disgust of life, and a feverish craving for release.

The essays are, in manner, impersonal, disengaged, critical, and deal directly with the inner world, not the outer-world calamities of souls half awake in another (as in the dramas), or the hideousness of this world to those whom it confines (as in the poems). This, however, constitutes a difference only of literary method, not of real substance. To be sure it has sufficed to create in many a belief that there are three (or at least two) Maeterlincks, champions respectively of three (or at least two) incompatible views of life. This mistake was made easier by the terminology. Such words as "soul," for instance, are difficult of definition. "Life," "goodness," "beauty," "profundity" are capable of equivocal use. The dictionary will not help the critic. It is important to explore the "mood" whence their use proceeds. Any artist will of course employ the most attractive phrases, those already bound up with what is dear and holy to the reader. A keen, almost cruel, eye must he have who will see through the folds of verbal draperies the naked thought itself. It is the interpreter's business, however, to do this for the reader as well as he can. The critic presumes to judge. In so doing of course he judges himself. The reader is at liberty to take

[1]References are by page to "Le Trèsor des Humbles," 7th edition. The versions are always by the writer.

issue with him—nay, to reverse his verdict—if he pleases. If it seems to the present writer, for instance, that M. Maeterlinck is not the exponent of vital Christianity, at all events his work as interpreter will be of use, and his criticism will aid the counter-critic as well as any who chance to agree with him.

M. Maeterlinck has given us a "brotherly warning" that he has read many abstruse books (p. 103). Again and again he shows us where he has culled this flower and that. We can easily conceive the "we" to be editorial, rather than dramatic, when he disclaims any such thing for "us" as central spontaneity—that is to say, the power to evolve, with external aid, systems of mystic philosophy (p. 109).

Plotinus is to him the prince of transcendental metaphysicians. He holds him to be wiser than Plato for rushing in where the latter, fearing to tread, drops on his knees (p. 113). Ruysbroeck, the Flemish recluse, whose chief work he translated to the confusion of the French reading public, leaves even Plotinus behind and Maeterlinck dares to follow! Ruysbroeck confines himself, the disciple tells us, to thoughts of the unthinkable (p. 102); (prudently, we may add, for what critics would dare assail him? as soon threaten the man in the moon with your fist!) In the works of Ruysbroeck the disciple professes "to have glimpsed the bluest peaks of the soul" (p. 155), whilst in Emerson he saw only "the hum-

bler hillocks of the human heart rounding away irregularly," mere foot-hills to Ruysbroeck's superb Sierras! We respect him for his honesty, loyalty, and—courage! He has chosen his masters; and whether ours or not, we can afford to confess that he has done them credit.

M. Maeterlinck does not disguise from himself the fact that he is at bottom a pessimist. After saying, for instance, graceful things of the "new optimism" of the "good optimist," Emerson, he carefully classes him with the "forerunners of a new, mysterious, and perhaps very pure pessimism," which he evidently looks forward to, "for," says he, "there is nothing more discouraging than a self-compelled optimism" (p. 202). He thinks that if a transplanetary visitor came to us, we should give him, as samples of humanity, not Balzac, George Meredith (or even Shakespeare and Racine, for the matter of that) but the treasures of Pascal, Emerson, or Hello, so that at least we should not be mistaken for "satisfied inhabitants of this earth" (p. 175).

The great question of course for every reader is: What exactly does Mr. Maeterlinck mean by the "soul?" To answer this none is competent but M. Maeterlinck himself. We shall at all events conjure up before the reader the "mood" which governs its shade of meaning, and then he will be able to decide whether or not we are correct in our view.

"So soon as we express anything we strangely

reduce its dimensions" (p. 65). "When we formulate what in us is mysterious, we are profounder than all that has been written, and greater than all that exists" (p. 121). A malicious critic might ascribe the "diminished size" and sudden shallowness to the exclusion of a flattering imagination which took indefiniteness for immensity—nay, infinity. "There is a part of life —and it is the best, purest, and greatest—which does not mingle in our ordinary life" (p. 60). Some day, perhaps, "our souls shall perceive one another without the mediation of the senses" (p. 29). A "new psychology" is announced which shall be "transcendental," busying itself exclusively with the "direct relations among men sustained by soul to soul, and the sensibility as well as the extraordinary manifestations of the soul" (p. 38).

Any book that like Ruysbroeck's reveals the "true life" which is inexplicable (p. 31) will yield its key only to him who "deserves it by turning away from life" (p. 117). We shall in fact never wholly understand it "till we see the objects themselves" which he describes or alludes to "on the other side of life" (p. 125). The approbation of the dying is prized, for they, as also he who suffers the extreme pressure of a great sorrow, are "clairvoyant."

In the first essay entitled "Silence," we are made to feel that there is much in us besides what our consciousness reveals. The agreeable hypothesis

is hazarded that what we do not know of ourselves is better than what we know. "Speech" is the symbol and expression of the conscious life of thought and passion. The unconscious life cannot, of course, utter itself in words. "Silence" then is symbolic of it, since its expression, if expression it have, is voiceless. Now, what lives that life in us, of which we are not directly aware, is the soul. The relations of "souls" are necessarily "above the reservoirs of thought" (p. 19). In the element of silence "souls freely possess one another" (p. 17). "Silence" is then a negative term for a positive notion, for "silences" differ not only in occasion, as the silence of calamity and love (p. 24), but they differ in quality according to the souls they proceed from (p. 11), and when shared by two souls may be hostile or friendly (p. 19).

In the second essay we are told that the "soul" sleeps and stirs periodically in individuals, nations, and races. It "probably came near to the surface of life" in Egypt and certainly in prehistoric India (p. 31). There were minor agitations in Persia and Alexandria and the "two mystic medieval centuries." In times "when intelligence and beauty appear at their best," the soul did not deign to show itself. Greece, Rome, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries of France, for instance, were devoid of "soul." The Elizabethans too were practically without it, "though *underneath* King Lear, Macbeth, and Hamlet" (p.

180), as also in certain Greek masterpieces (p. 189), the soul vaguely quickened as in an antenatal dream. When the natural man flourishes the soul languishes. The soul and the natural man are, we infer, contrary powers, and their perfection in any age varies inversely. The soul clearly is something unnatural. That we are now entering a period of "soul" is the purport of the second essay, and the symptoms thereof are many.

In the third essay the strange "organic warning" (p. 82) of such as are destined to an early death, and the fact that they seem to be marked out from the others, are considered.

"There are things more impervious and deeper than thought" (p. 53), for in spite of ourselves, maybe, we have divined their case. Were they "born to affirm that life had no purpose?" (p. 52) asks M. Maeterlinck. "Who can tell what is the motive power of events, and whether they are ourselves or we are they? Are they born of us, or we of them? Do we attract them, or they us? Do they transform us, or we them? Do they never mistake their course?" (p. 54). That is to say, does the soul create the fate for a man, or does fate create the soul? As both are inaccessible, unknown quantities, neither question is answerable. One thing, however, seems clear: that in such as have a clear sense of impending catastrophe the "soul" is more nearly awake than in others.

Now follow two essays that set forth in care-

ful fashion the spiritual indifference of conduct, good or bad, and of intellectual development. Women as viewed in the latter essay are admittedly inferior, yet somehow in the deeps equal to men—nay, superior, just because of their patent inferiority, since they rely more on the "soul!" Woman sits at the very feet of fate, and is wiser, though a pretty simpleton in her resignation, than the man who lives in and by his potent wits! A vindication of their equality with men in the "invisible" that will hardly content, I fear, the women of English speech!

Then we reach three critical essays—on Ruysbroeck, in whom a new philosophic faculty (p. 112) is discovered; on Emerson, who absolves us from any necessity of heroical hours (such as Carlyle would have us obtain for the sake of self-respect), pointing out that the hero needs the approval of the ordinary man, while the ordinary man does not ask for the hero's approval (p. 149), bidding us revere our common hours (p. 152); the last on Novalis and his doctrine of the deeper self (p. 163) that "there is something other than mind," and that it is not mind which allies us to the universe—but of course the "soul" that transcends mind—even "when mind is becoming unconscious, as it is about to become divine" (p. 159).

After these three essays that deal with three sages, the first characteristically a master of the soul, the second of the affections, the third of the mind (according to M. Maeterlinck), we have only

two more essays to traverse ere we arrive at the last three, published first, and to which the other ten serve only as approach. "Le Tragique Quotidien" sets before us the fact that not in circumstances of the outer man, but in the suffering itself common to all, lies the tragic sublime—above will; and in "L'Etoile" we are made to consider the destinies of lives as of divine origin, at least proceeding from the "soul," and responding to it.

The last three essays ("Invisible Goodness," the "Profound Life," and "Interior Beauty") are really one. In the first the goodness is not morality, but a sort of gracious complacency or piety, which is a symptom of the incessant stir of the soul (p. 247); in the second we confront the means of sanctification; in the last, the bliss itself of the perfect realization of the "soul."

From this survey there should surely result a provisional definition at least of what M. Maeterlinck means by "soul." Theoretically it is an unknown kernel-self, so to speak—we are veils of ourselves. When we die, it, which is our true self, lives. When the shell is broken the kernel is exposed. Sickness, sorrow, love-sickness, and life-nausea are cracks of that shell usually called life.

But this kernel-self could have no interest for the living man, since revealed only to the dead. Ecstasies, trances, vivid transports, however, are glimpses of it, here and now. "Soul," for us who live and are not mystics of that extreme type, turns out to be a state of consciousness, as unre-

lated as possible with sensations, passions, thoughts, a species of doze which delivers one from the outside world; a sort of waking sleep that floats one out of the region of responsibility. It is producible by contemplation, or by the extreme emotions occasioned by calamity or love. Whether the theoretical and the practical senses of "soul" in M. Maeterlinck are really the same, or constitute an equivocation, remains for the reader to judge.

Let us now run rapidly through the gamut of M. Maeterlinck's main ideas: "Fate was only once adored without rival. She was then for the very gods a terrifying mystery" (p. 206). Now fate is double: that of ancestors and that of offspring. We thought love a free act of individuals. It turns out to be the effect on consciousness of the desire for life in the unborn (p. 225)! "There is no joyful destiny, there is no happy star. The star you fancy happy is one that awaits its hour" (p. 207). There is, however, to-day "a new nobility in the ache of living" (p. 209). More important than to know the character of your friend is "to perceive his exact situation with reference to the unknown about him, the habit of chance in its dealings toward him" (p. 198).

These "habits of chance" (p. 220) bear some relation to individuals; "events seem drawn by certain thoughts and certain souls" (p. 220). Are there not great chances asleep on the horizon which some too sudden motion might awake (p.

222)? Some dare affirm (*he* does not expressly) "that a beautiful soul transfigures the saddest fate to beauty" (p. 222). In the battles of the individual with destiny "the will cannot interfere" (p. 217). The "will itself is the ripest fruit of destiny" (p. 219). "The ancient will itself, the old will so well known and so logical, is transformed in turn, and experiences the immediate contact of great, inexplicable, profound laws" (p. 44).

In such case as this, little stress can be placed upon morality. The sins of the flesh and of hot blood are felt to be less important than we suppose (pp. 67-69). We suspect that "there are deeper laws than those that preside over our acts and our thoughts" (p. 72). "Will the lowest idea or the noblest leave any trace on the diamond pivot" (the soul) (p. 72)? "God must smile on our gravest sins as we at the gambol of puppies" (p. 73). At bottom the soul does not know of any sin it could commit which should be its sin (p. 74), and the real law being unknown, sin is itself unknown, yet the soul feels guilty (p. 75). Perhaps the only real sins are to have resisted one's intuitions, to have "ceased to love" (p. 76).

Our real life of soul is only lived by chance, in spite of ourselves, from sheer absent-mindedness (p. 59).

"Perhaps we should know too much if we knew all that we know" (p. 58). We reach God every moment without knowing it (p. 143). Smiles, as

well as tears, open the doors of the other world (p. 272). "Those who have not been very unhappy" can "live with souls," if they have experienced the "silences of love" (p. 24).

The sage does not require shocks; trifles suffice him (p. 258). "Quiet, when one thinks of it, is terrible" (p. 182).

Now the sage is distinguished not by any will to shape himself. To be sure "it is useful to strive for the elevation of one's life, and one ought to tend toward summits where an incapacity for doing ill is attained" (p. 276).

"Let us strive to be more beautiful than we are; we shall never outstrip our soul" (p. 292). "No soul can tell what is the power of a soul that strives to live in an atmosphere of beauty, and that is actively beautiful within" (p. 295). "But after all it is of less importance to transform one's life than to become conscious of it; for as soon as it has been seen it transforms itself" (p. 267). We require only "attention" (p. 259), "waiting for fortunate moments." We live, all of us, in the sublime. What we lack is not occasions of living in heaven, but attention and concentration and a little "soul-intoxication" (p. 262). "What we want is not a chance, but a habit" (p. 266). "One must be efficaciously attentive" (p. 268). "It is not enough to possess a truth; the truth must possess us" (p. 269).

We have thus reached the true use of the will—ruling the future by transmuting the past into a

sad smile (p. 222)—by intense meditation, a species of self-hypnosis, attaining to the trance, ecstasy, the blissful experience which is supposed to be the realization of a deeper self (p. 163). For we are invisible beings (p. 170); man beginning truly only where he seems to end (p. 172), and the "true birth" of "soul" being "the first feeling that there lurks something grave and unexpected in life" (p. 255)—an experience which can be repeated (p. 256), and in any case the "soul" is never lost if once got (p. 15).

Giving it the sense of soul-consciousness (a something so different from ordinary consciousness as to be, with reference to it, termed unconsciousness) we understand why M. Maeterlinck puts so great a value on consciousness. To know is the only way to become. We become not by effort, but by a recognition of the forces which wait to make us. Hence the value of dramatic poems. Misery is their basis (p. 211). We want to meet our sorrows half-way (p. 207), because they increase our consciousness—which is the only region in which we feel ourselves living (p. 227).

Of course life is not the passions nor violent action. "Hamlet" has the time to live because he does not act (p. 187).

Love, however, has a part to play; but of course it is a love "of the soul" (p. 246). It is construed as a haunting memory of primal unity (p. 245). The truest loves of the soul never declare themselves—they wait

for another life (pp. 59, 60). A common experience of secret goodness will often assume the character of love. At all events, a strange sense of fellowship results (p. 250). As a matter of fact, when we love it is not character we take note of in the beloved. We laugh at open vices. We believe in unseen virtues (p. 250). Those who love are always thwarted. Hialmar and Maleine, Péleas and Mélisande, Marcellus and Ursula, Palomides and Alladine—all alike die or yearn for death. Love itself, should fate prove favorable, is perverse. It finds nourishment in mutual pain. It exacts proofs of love in the beloved. Hence it asks not death, but prolonged torture uncomplainingly—nay, passionately—borne (p. 237). Golaud cannot let Melisande die in peace. To love without reserve, with complete abandonment (p. 297), is to be to another as to God (p. 307); and to think of nothing, as we saw, was to think of God (p. 377).

Love benumbs—love is an ache and anesthetic at the same time. To love is to lose one's faculty for noting ugliness (p. 305), to become unable to distinguish between beauty that creates love and the beauty love creates (p. 307). One grows unexacting; one judges not; one loves not one's neighbor, but what is eternal in him (p. 274). One goes deeper than character into the substance of the lover (p. 25)—the "soul" which is beyond the reach of taint.

II.

We fear very much that, whatever M. Maeterlinck's good intentions may be, he will not win his way to the sort of readers he has in view.

There are those who, in ease and plenty, cultivate an artificial discontent. The fast life of their forbears or their own has exhausted their vitality. They want quiet for life, isolation for pride, a little fasting for appetite's sake after surfeits, after the exhaustion of the power of condiments and stimulants. There are for these persons, nowadays, no monasteries and convents. Besides, the irrevocableness of vows would demand a sincere disgust of life or heroic self-abnegation, and they only toy with tedium and satiation.

To such person the essays of M. Maeterlinck offer a peculiar dissipation. They "keep open" the path from the seen to the unseen, to be sure, but besides they rest a man for paths that lead back to the seen from the "intense inane." After some pessimistic sentiment of a sweetishly pious sort one obtains a new relish for the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Life is no more a spontaneous joy. To live is not enough. One demands, forsooth, pleasure, ease, sinecures and curesins! These are scarce, uncertain, and soon spent. A new pleasure and ease can, however, be wrung from pain and dis-

ease. Not the joy of "seeing how much one can stand," with the virile Camden sage; but the joy of maudlin self-preoccupation, of continual noting of symptoms, recording pulse beats and temperature, and an hourly diagnosis, with plentiful self-condolences, tear-bottles of Etruscan model, and pathetic obituary speeches, self-uttered over one's own fancy-corpse! To such persons we fear the "Trèsor des Humbles" will be only too welcome. For, with it in hand, they will imagine themselves spiritual saints in the bud—nay, in full bloom perhaps—and cease to feel anything like an honest, conscious pang; sending up the stench of their corruption as a "sweet-smelling savor" to a most amiable God, who only smiles on their actual sins, as on the gambols of little puppies!

The source of its immorality is not difficult to seek. It is in the antithesis, mind, matter; soul, body. It is in the subtle Manicheism.

If what is conscious and physical count for nothing when good, it must do so also when evil. You cannot transcend good without also transcending evil.

If flesh be viewed as the expression of spirit, deed of will, then at once they one and all acquire value. The body as the temple of the Holy Ghost, works as the fruit of faith, had their dignity in St. Paul's thought.

True, for argument's sake, let us admit, is the notion that there is a kernel-self, and that the shell hides it. True that the shell is corruptible,

and that the kernel contains eternal life. True that in time the shell must break and rot. But all this does not yet necessarily imply any real disparagement of the shell.

If the kernel is life, its business is to make shells. If the shell is gone, it will go to work through a long vital process and reproduce itself (nut—shell and kernel) once more.

This is what the Hindus called the "wheel of life," the perpetual tendency of life to incarnate. Believing this to be true, their pessimistic thought set about finding some fanciful expedient for counteracting this tendency to body forth. Body being evil, life which produced body was evil. The "soul" was the terrible superstition, and the manliest school of Buddha's faith quietly denied its existence, ingeniously saving morality as a means to stop the process of embodiment.

And here is exactly the glory of the Christian religion.

It has through centuries held up the doctrine of the "resurrection of the flesh," the most noble and forcible utterance of the glory of life, and the everlasting worth of body. Whatever Schopenhauer may say, the core of Christianity is optimism. It has cherished doctrines which in pessimistically inclined periods all the artillery of doubt has been directed against in vain—doctrines of the resurrection and the ascension, of the Church as the body of Christ, and the flesh as the temple of the Holy Ghost. In fact, the glory

of sober Christianity is that it has vitally assimilated the truth of both pessimism and optimism, noting the evil to the full, perceiving its purpose, and crowning it with good. Redemption and salvation are processes dependent on outward sacraments, institutions, doctrines. It matters greatly what we do, feel, think. The Holy Ghost operates through outward means. In order to hold fast these practical truths, it has been willing to leave such purely metaphysical problems as the one and the many, time and eternity, the finite and the infinite, unsolved—or rather it has declared them not real problems at all, mere puzzles of a sophistic sort having nothing whatever to do with life! In this how much wiser unto salvation has organized Christianity been than all the philosophical sects of Hindustan! If we want a Christian metaphysics, we shall undoubtedly yet have one. The Hindus have had metaphysics, and have starved spiritually. We fear that M. Maeterlinck's philosophy, gleaned a little here, a little there, has no mission for the living. It might possibly reassure the dying, but even then it would need the practical test of years. It is surely significant that the Church has never for any length of time committed itself to the pessimistic mystics, for all their sweetness and grace. The fact is, such mysticism is an anesthetic, and the world needs stimulants. The fact is, it has proved of little or no use in helping the world forward. Fènèlon is very charming, but a mad

Savonarola is more potent. A Molinos has his mission, but a Luther is more effective in the long run. The practical experiment, the service of life, is and must be the test of religious theories. Do they, not wean us from earth to heaven, but make earth heavenly? not disembody man, but embody the God-man?

III.

Henry Mill Alden's "Study of Death."

Now optimistic mysticism has a remarkable exponent in our own country, of whom I fear we are not so proud as we should be. The title of this second work, written in the same spirit and style as his first anonymous publication, "God in His World," perhaps discourages the average reader. One thing, however, one soon feels on opening the book—it is not written by an amateur mystic. A profound earnestness is felt on every page. A personal fervor of devotion pulses in almost every sentence. The dedication startles us: to his wife, on her death-bed. Never were tenderer, more reverent words spoken; if not as rapturous as those of Robert to Elizabeth Browning, they are as sincere and full of holy love.

"Modern religious mysticism, . . . disposed to sacrifice nature to the supernatural, . . . falls into the slough of pessimism. Only the blood that leaps into the quick and full pulsa-

tions of earthly life can have an elastic rebound to its eternal font" (p. 49). That is his protest and fundamental conviction in one sentence. "Faith in life—such faith as to give no credence to apparent diminution as signs of weakness, seeing in them rather the intimations of some mighty transformation" (pp. 47, 48). "The Angel of Life, who out of the rich darkness puts forth the blade and bud and babe; all the fresh and tender luxuriance of growth is but the imagery of his abundance" (pp. 45, 46).

The work itself is written in an exquisitely compact style. It bears several readings not because it "amazes" by incoherency, by the lack of distinct classification of matter and firm procedure of thought, but because the style has a richness of suggestion—"more is meant than meets the ear." Surprises encounter us constantly.

"To all manifest existence we apply the term nature (*natura*), which means forever being born; and on its vanishing side it is *moritura* or 'forever dying'" (p. 17). Apart from such felicitous use of philology, words are constantly employed in their primary senses.

Repentance, absolution, forgiveness, turn out to have new values which are the old. So, abstract words and ideas are knit back to their picturesque, material sources, to the evident satisfaction of our genial author, who, though highly spiritual, is reverently carnal also. "The priest *forged* the thunderbolts of heaven for the enforce-

ment of the civil edict" (p. 151). How delightfully delicate is the insinuation! Hardly ever does he err. "But" is repeated within seven words of itself (p. 113); "might," within nine (p. 120); an infinitive is split—"to . . . cheerfully receive" (p. 171); with "little" as subject we have "enter" in the plural. His antitheses are pointed by the use of similar words, and this, occasionally, is done oftener than the reader may enjoy; strain and restraint (p. 210), assistance, resistance, etc. But this is no doubt due to a desire for clearness. Such blemishes are trifles. A revision would remove them. As to the learning, it is used in a most unpedantic way. Sometimes he quotes from memory, one would think, and the memory is proverbially deceitful. St. Paul is credited with a verse of St. James (p. 271). See James i. 27. "Resist not him that is evil," is read, "resist not evil," a possible but rather unlikely reading (p. 231).

We make these trivial suggestions not because we are disposed to carp, but just for the reason that we love the book, and desire to tell the reader that a very close perusal will reveal at most half a dozen slight infelicities, or inaccuracies, which in so large a work is surely remarkable.

Writers of English never seem to be impeccable stylists, as the French; it is probably because we are less fastidious readers, and have more reverence for deeds than words. Still, perfection, whenever attainable, is to be desired even in

English. Not that we should wholly anathematize a Carlyle or a Whitman; for literary barbarians are picturesque in their way. A literary gentleman cannot do with grace even once what they can do day by day *sans peur et sans reproche.*

Now, as to the structure of the book. The proem is a symbolic interpretation of the story of the temptation, "The Dove and the Serpent." First, the denial of evil, from sheer ignorance or reckless joy in good; then good *and* evil, a broken world, a divided will; then good from evil—the reunion in the complete man of what in "human thought had been put asunder" (p. 5). The proem is indeed a poem, stating the real problem which "The Study of Death" addresses itself to solve.

In the first book two visions of death are contrasted. He tells us that "the operations of nature, . . . being forever recurrent, cultivate in us the habit of expectation, so that we refuse to accept finality" (p. 9). Fronting the corpse "we are in no presence; it is the brutal fact of absence that stares us in the face" (p. 10). Instead of "a new synthesis," "we shall see dissolution, a sinking analytic motion" (p. 11). But the mystic's eye sees farther. "Life came upon the wing of death, and so departs." The "trope,"—that is to say, a movement that returns upon itself, to start afresh—is universal. "It is proper to life itself" (p. 15), "as proper to life as life" (p. 17). "The idea of life as transcend-

ing any individual embodiment is as germane to science as it is to faith" (p. 17). "Sleep is the hierophant of a minor mystery, folding us in mantle of darkness, renewing the world's destiny, recovering time. Death within the veil instantaneously and every instant transforms life from its very source, recovering eternity. Sleep is re-creation. Death is the mighty negative, whereby all worlds vanish into that nothing from which all worlds are made, the vast in-breathing of the Spirit of God for his ever-repeated fiat of creation. Sleep suspends the individuality within its embodiment. Death shows the inmost personality in a divine presence—that angel of each one of us which forever beholds the face of the Father" (p. 21).

In the second book we have a most fascinating reconstruction of the primitive world of men: "Native impressions." He finely says that when we speak of the old superstitions "we juggle with the dry twigs of what was the green tree of life" (p. 34). We must be careful to preserve the sympathetic attitude if we would understand what the "superstitions" really signified to those who believed in them.

"Among primitive peoples we find no allusion to a future state" (p. 35). "The domain to which death introduces the soul was thought of as a past rather than a future" (p. 37). Then, "not only were the springs of life more divine, but its whole procedure so entirely divine that to think of it as

a probation or an experiment would have seemed blasphemous" (p. 37). "Death" was thought of "as divinisation," a "restoration of latent powers through descent, and by way of darkness" (p. 39). "The dead were mightier than the living" (p. 39). Soon, however, with the advance of civilization (p. 44), man forgot "the earth" (p. 36), "God removed from this world to his heaven," and "death became the dread descent into that shadowy realm of impotence and insignificance" (p. 43). The Eumenides became the avenging furies (p. 44).

The "denunciation of selfhood" had no place in primitive mysticism (p. 50). "We say that a man is born alone and that he dies alone; but he is born of his kind, and to his kind he dies" (p. 50). Only in fellowship can he find himself (p. 51). Man loves not the world, nor self, until he has loved his kind (p. 51). "Individuation is for love. Even crime will compel solidarity" (p. 51). Selfhood is but the reflex of fellowship (p. 51). "A subjective mysticism contemplating as possible the exclusion of selfhood by an influx of divine life, is irrational—it is expansion of selfhood—that provides a great chamber for the Lord" (p. 52).

"He who denies resurrection as fresh embodiment sets his face against the mortal hope" (p. 54). "The ultimate mysticism will be that of science vitalized by the Christian faith, and of that faith illuminated in all its outward range by

science. . . . Christianity will again accept nature, as indeed it did in its prime, holding it to be one with the Lord" (p. 54).

Mr. Alden points out how the Greeks turned from "the Olympian dynasty of gods, hopelessly immortal . . . to gods that could die and grieve" (p. 57). "The primitive faith accepted death and evil as it accepted darkness and frost, and at the same time regarded them as parts of Love's cycle. Thus it emphasized the limitless divine bounty and indulgence" (p. 58). "Science itself," he says, "brings the human reason back to the recognition of evil—or what we call evil—as a reaction proper to life in all its manifestations, divine or human" (p. 62). Christianity, he believes, will complete its cycle, in a return to that principle (p. 62).

But the third book is the great section of the "Study of Death."

The "Prodigal Son" is viewed as cosmic parable, and there are a dozen poems in this part. To give an adequate notion of its depth and beauty by excerpts is impossible. The planet being the prodigal, the sun, the father in the solar system (pp. 70-72, 286-288), is as sublime a thing by itself as one will easily find anywhere in literature.

Mr. Alden, a devout student of all the scientist has to offer, does not by any means accept always the dominant theory. In the first chapter he protests that from homogeneity there is no way out (p. 85). God is always in his world, and always

working the great miracle of creation (p. 90). Every synthesis is a manifestation of a new set of properties—in chemistry, in biological development (p. 94). These do not appear as additions from without, but as liberations from within (p. 93). Death appears hand in hand with love, upon the appearance of the specialization called sex, which is for life's sake (pp. 101, 102). Structure is for life, not life for structure, is the leading thought. When we study structure, death, the decay of structure seems a calamity. Really it is a return of the dynamic to the static; it is a storing up for spending, a withdrawing for new appearance.

Life is viewed as transcending structure (p. 110). He notes that life has a tendency toward difficulty rather than toward facility (p. 111); life as creative—that is to say—not the creation that reveals life to us. Fortunate environment leads to degeneracy (p. 112). Neither safety nor ease is an ultimate objective aim of nature; "she emphasizes discontinuity rather than continuity, running toward death in her progression, burning all bridges behind her as she advances. In the largest view stability is an illusion, uniformity a disguise, the persistence of type not an eternal concern" (p. 112).

"In the very essence of life is that which gives the meaning to our terms 'one and many,' but not to the one apart from the other" (p. 129). The planetary man ignores that he is still in the sun,

The solar man (p. 131), however, is within him and knows.

In the second chapter, the "Moral Order," he shows how came to bloom, very gradually, the "thornless rose of Merit" (pp. 151, 152). "The original sacrament of kinship" is declared to be "the fountain of primitive piety Godward or manward." By the expansion of kinship "arose a spiritual idea—the idea of the all-Father, the perfect realization of which is the kingdom of heaven, whose iniquities, whether of pain or of bliss, are as impartial as those of nature—a kingdom more of living righteousness rather than of formal rectitude" (p. 161).

The most startling insight of this chapter is that we are concerned not with logic, but with life (p. 168). "What men think it is right for them to do they regard also as the righteousness of God" (p. 165). Moral order expressed a vital requirement (p. 169). It would seem more rational, therefore, to derive religious doctrine from it than to do the reverse.

Now we perceive that "in every social organization less inclusive than that of a universal brotherhood," the simple creed of a universal Father must be denied (p. 166). Yet in this necessary inconsistency he sees no evil at all.

"Conscious restraint or rational control, regarded as a moral merit, is but a specialized form of that inhibition which, unconscious and untrained, is yet a more potent and surer bond in s

natural operations. There is no such temperance attainable as that which nature has spontaneously—no positive purity like that of passion" (p. 170).

Morality at most is of the structure not of the constructing life. All organization has its history and is for life. "All indurations are walls about the free play of life within" (p. 175). So the social order, which, hardening, hurts the individual, really serves to "secure the inviolability of the individual and domestic seclusion" (p. 175). "The hard envelope about the seed must be broken for the seed's germination." "Its death contributes to fresh growth." "The systems, like generations, pass away, not because of their imperfections, but rather because they have reached such perfectness" (p. 176). The contradiction of principles is merely the contrast between life and structure. "The moral order is that cycle of human experience which, beginning in a flesh-and-blood kinship, is completed in a kinship which embraces the universe" (p. 180). That is to say, it is a development in man. Actually, the kinship exists. It is not recognized as yet. It cannot be—nay, perhaps it must not yet be. For then the cycle would be completed and we should have to begin afresh. For so soon as the resistance of structure ceased there would be liberation of the life and new creation.

The next chapter pursues the line of argument

suggested. "What matters it if the blossoms are swept away by the wind and rain, so the fruit is set; if the walls of the temple fall, so the Presence that filled the temple is glorified; or even if the entire structure of a civilization is destroyed, so the race is reborn" (p. 212)?

"There is indeed no problem save of our own making. The issues of life have their spontaneous reconcilement, because life itself is eternal. There is in that life a principle which is creative; which is as unmoral as is childhood, because it transcends morality which makes not for mere rectitude but for righteousness, not for betterment merely but for renewal; which does not mend the prodigal's rags, but brings him home" (p. 221).

In the fourth book, in four chapters, the claims of Christianity to be the religion of eternal life are investigated, and death is finally dismissed as but another name for life—of life when gathered upon itself, resting in a "Sabbath" from the labors of what we call a life.

The inconsistencies and vicissitudes of historic Christianity are dwelt upon tenderly, honestly. He does not make the mistake so common with literary men—that of judging spiritual and religious movements entirely by their literature or their creeds and catchwords. He does not fail to take into account that natural unconscious inconsistency, that vital hypocrisy (if so one may term it), which always neutralizes dogmatic acids. He is not in love with that consistency which

mechanical and impossible. History, as a matter of fact, invariably dissappoints the theorist who ventures into the field of prophecy. The literary critic, too, even when so keen and piercing as Friedrich Nietzsche, assumes something "consistent" to have been historic, which any one knowing human nature ought to be convinced never can be. "Competitions and antagonisms are necessary to outward integration and development." The law of love must perpetually reconcile them, yet they must continue to propagate. There is the paradox.

It is this calm resting of man's case on life, not on logic—this acceptance of the apparent contradiction—which above all else characterizes, it seems to me, the sane mysticism of Mr. Alden's book. He is a real optimist. If he cries for more and argues for more, it is because what he has seen and known he has loved. He cries, "again," "forever!" He thanks the Father for what is; evil and hell—sin itself—he accepts as God accepts them, needful to the whole, a form of life itself. Life rejoices in that play of war against itself, the division for contest, which ends in reconciliation. What we call life is the contest; what we call death is the reconciliation. Really both are one: night and day, night for day, day for night. If we live, it is to die. If we die, it is to live. Not because when alive we prefer death, or vice versa, but because one is spending, the other hoarding, *and both are glorious, of God,* eternally self-repeating.

In his beautiful dedication he says that "love never denied death," and so he believes "death will not deny love." New fellowships, perhaps, shall be with the same souls. Not recognitions, but cognitions. Cognitions are but recognitions. In our death we may know all our lives, and build our dream of them; in our lives we forget death and the loves that there found rest.

But we must leave the reader to the books. Let him weigh "Le Trèsor des Humbles" against "The Study of Death." Let him ask himself which most subserves the purpose of intenser and higher life. Let him choose. In any case we will do well to honor our American mystic whose genial good sense and ripe scholarship never forsake him, who is both poet and philosopher—in fact, never the one without at the same time being the other; who loves life and makes us love him. It is no fool's paradise he introduces us to. But even were it one—we ask once more in the name of common sense—"where ignorance is bliss, 'twere folly to be wise"—and is the dweller in a fool's paradise such a fool after all, if it be a paradise that can last out his life? Perhaps it comforts the pessimist to consider himself "the only wise." So be it. He *may* have his wisdom —may it bury him! Only let him not be angry with us when we declare him a nuisance and a bore should he speak too plainly, and if we should ask him to demonstrate his view of the universe by bowing himself out as soon as possible! To Mr. Alden long life!

To M. Maeterlinck, at least, our literary respect—if not our allegiance. At all events, we will thank him most cordially for never having bored us with a long countenance. Such grave rotundity, embonpoint, and good fellowship, we fear, belong to an amateur pessimist only; a delightful dilettante exploiter for aesthetes of mystic agonies, and we accept him as a needful piece of self-contradiction, doubtless having his uses in the universe and assuredly on our center tables and on our library-shelves.

APPENDIX TO ESSAY II.

At the University of the South a course in Poetics has been undertaken that may be of interest to some of our readers:—

The art of poetry taught not merely analytically, but as the creative art which it is, by methods analogous to those found effective in the teaching of the other fine arts, that is to say:

(a) By the copying of master-pieces to make personal discovery of the creative principles involved (*i.e.*, translation.)

(b) By efforts at original production, such as involve a close study of master-pieces kindred in theme, and an application of the principles discovered by such study.

To eliminate then the personal factor, and bring the work of the student to a severe objective test, the art of poetry—composition, structure, diction, cadence, rhythm, rhyme, stanzaic division, etc.—will be taught experimentally:

(1) Through the translation by the several students into English verse of selected foreign poems, of recognized excellence (*i. e.* a suitable substitution is effected of a secondary "written" poem to convey unaltered the "psychic" or intellectual and emotional poem.)

(2) Through the recomposition of the matter from some master-piece (unknown to the student), and the subsequent comparison of his product with the master-piece. (*i. e.*, a comparison is instituted of new with old "psychic" poem.)

(3) Through the recomposition and reconstruction, for poetic expression, of materials drawn, (with the knowledge of the student), from famous English prose. The proposed "psychic" poem will be criticised by the instructor, and discussed by the class. Thereupon, the student will proceed to versify the resulting composition, and again submit it, first to the class for further criticism, and lastly to elected judges of recognized competence. (*i. e.* by experiment, the difference is ascertained which exists between versified prose conceptions, and a poetic conception first expressed in prose, and then in verse.)

APPENDIX TO DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI AS TRANSLATOR: TWO LETTERS

The writer ventured to address Mr. Rossetti for definite and irrefutable testimony on certain points in his proposed treatment of Dante Gabriel Rossetti as a Translator. The result was two helpful letters, which being free to use as he pleased,* he first quoted from, in his text and footnotes; but, upon second thought, considered it fairer and more courteous to print entire, italicizing the particular parts that bear on his paper, and let the reader judge for himself, and share the writer's gratitude for Mr. Rossetti's courtesy.

3 ST. EDMUND'S TERRACE.
REGENT'S PARK, N. W., May 14, 1909.

DEAR SIR: There can not be any reasonable doubt that my brother saw in an edition of Leopardi, or a selection from his works, those lines, printed as being by Leopardi, and such they were as a matter of translation; and my brother, *knowing nothing about the French original* by Arnault, *translated the lines from Leopardi's Italian*, and assigned them to Leopardi. So far as I remember, he did not at any later date ascertain the fact about Arnault.

In editions of my brother's poems, published by me with notes, the fact about Arnault is mentioned.

I am not entirely sure what is signified by my brother's gift of visualization. In this present instance the only visualization which he exercised (so far as I perceive) was that he saw and read a poem printed as being Leopardi's, and not being aware of anything to the contrary, he translated it, and brought out his translation as being done from Leopardi.

Believe me, dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,
WILLIAM M. ROSSETTI.

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*I have had the pleasure of receiving your letter of May 25, and I have written down, as within, a few observations bearing upon what you say. They are at your service, for any use to which you may care to put them.

Yours very faithfully,
W. M. ROSSETTI.